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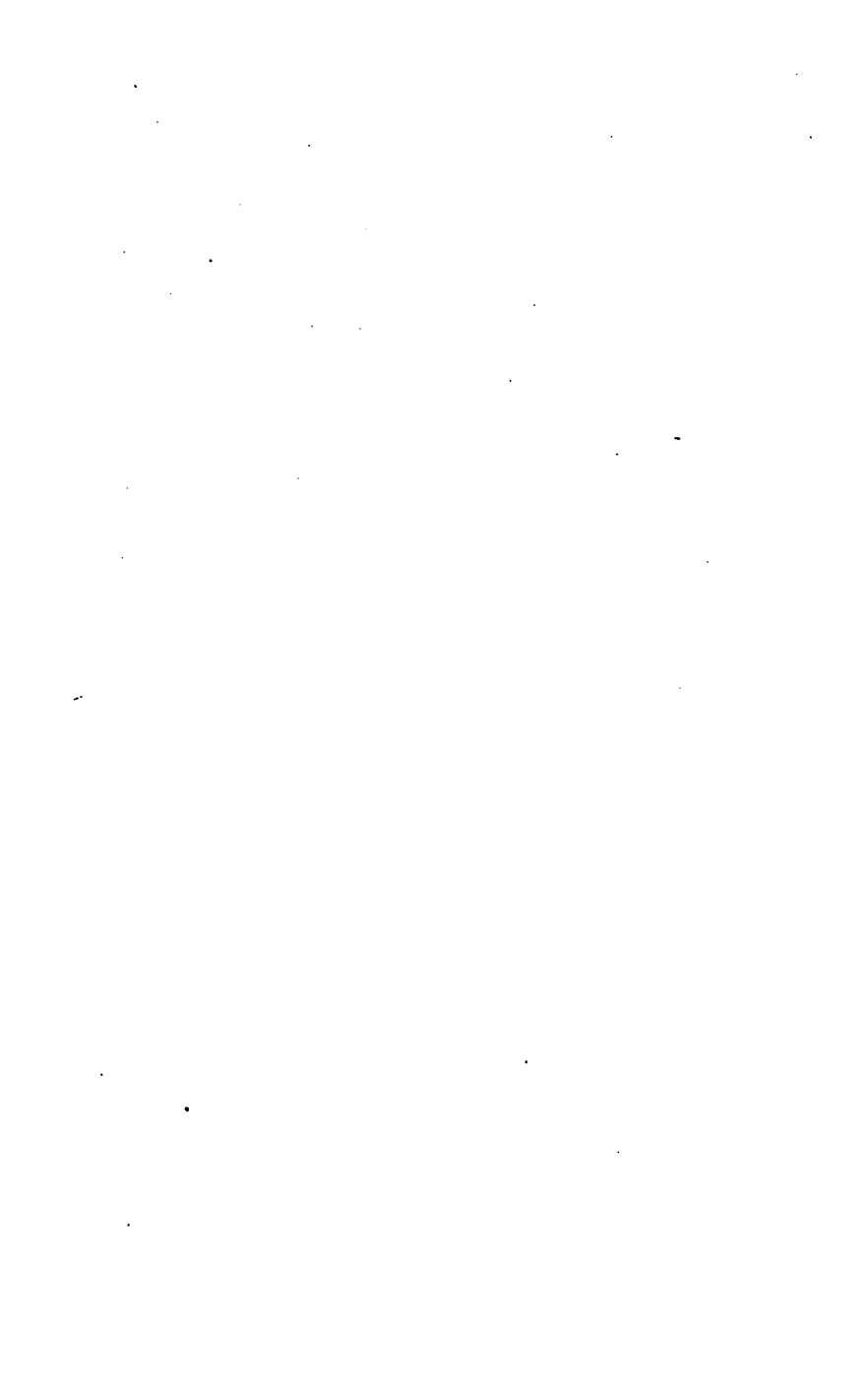
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PLANCHAT



LIFE OF HENRI PLANCHAT.



LIFE OF HENRI PLANCHAT.

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
HENRI PLANCHAT,

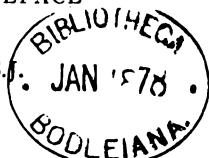
PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF BROTHERS OF ST. VINCENT OF PAUL,
CHAPLAIN TO THE PATRONAGE OF ST. ANNE FOR APPRENTICES
AND YOUNG WORKMEN, AT CHARONNE ;
ONE OF THE HOSTAGES MASSACRED BY THE COMMUNE AT BELLEVILLE,
MAY 26, 1871, OUT OF HATRED TO RELIGION.

BY
MAURICE MAIGNEN,
Member of the Congregation of Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul.

Translated from the French.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

BY THE
REV. W. H. ANDERDON, S.J.



"Thy dead men shall live, my slain shall rise again."--ISAIAH XLVI. 19.

LONDON :
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PREFACE.

THIS vivid yet simple narrative of the life and martyrdom of a holy priest affords two topics of surpassing interest. His life was one of a devotion, a self-abandonment and detachment, that paved the way for the martyrdom which consummated all its previous sacrifices. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." When the friend to whom and for whose sake a human life is offered, is He Who has shown the way, and given grace and invitation to follow, then the death offered up to Him is invested, not with the stirring features of heroism only, or a meek and noble endurance of wrong: it is elevated into a likeness, supernatural and even awful in its sublimity, to His own life-giving Passion. As we follow the Abbé Planchat, and his companions in suffering, along that death-march which his biographer has well called their *Via Dolorosa*, tracking their exhausted yet resolute steps from La Roquette to the glorious termination in the Rue Haxo, we seem to recall

passages of the everlasting Gospel re-enacted before our eyes. Those priestly martyrs, uniting the oblation of their heart's blood with that of the altar on Calvary, have more of the drama of the Passion than ever was presented at Ammergau. They reproduce, to the letter, the circumstances of their Master's suffering. Pilate, too, and the other agents in His condemnation, rise again to our minds when, arrived at the *secteur*, or head-quarters of that department of the city, a chief executioner cries out to the surging, frantic multitude, "What is to be done with the hostages?" and there is one universal cry in answer: "Put them to death!" Again; how truly, in the very words of his Lord, might the meek, laborious priest—traversing for the last time on his dolorous way those squalid and vicious quarters of Paris that had witnessed his errands of charitable zeal—have addressed the pitiless multitudes, now clamouring for his blood: "When I was daily with you . . . you did not stretch your hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

It conveys an important lesson to mark the steps by which the prayerful, self-denying life of the subject of this memoir prepared him for martyrdom. That high grace is not usually won *extempore*. They who attain it have "disposed ascensions in their hearts" * by faithfulness to previous talents and opportunities.

* Psalm lxxxiii. 6.

We read, it is true, in the Church's records, of some who have redeemed a state of less perfection, or even an overt fall, by the supreme and crowning act of offering their blood for the truth. "Nothing in their lives became them like the leaving it." But such are exceptional cases, like a miraculous conversion. In the ordinary laws of the Divine government, "he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound." He who executes the immediate round of his ministry and vocation, like the deacon ascending to the priesthood, "purchases to himself a good degree, and much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." So was it with the Abbé Planchat. During the years through which the present memoir follows his apostolical ministry, this good shepherd had given his cares and labours without stint for the flock purchased by the Precious Blood of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls. At length, as a consequence, he was called to give his blood also. And thus, it may be repeated, the two things which stand out prominently in the little book here offered to the reader, have an obvious mutual relation—the laborious self-denying ministry, and the Christian heroism that sealed its close.

It may be hoped that the incidental notice obtained from these pages, regarding an institution so fertile in good as the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, may prepare the way for its

establishment in England. The great Saint from whom this association of devoted priests takes its name, and whose spirit they faithfully copy, is too universal in his efforts of charity not to settle down at once, and find a home, wherever human distress and need abound. He belongs to no country, age, or clime. His own early captivity under the hands of the infidel was doubtless, like that of St. Patrick, designed by Providence to enlarge and perpetuate his sympathy for his suffering fellow-man. But, that noviceship once over, it was to ministries of a more cosmopolite kind that Vincent's energies were directed. The Saracen of the African shore has had his day on the catalogue of tyrants, and has been dethroned; the sons of France have more than made reprisals, and now occupy his place. The hideous leprosy, again, that scourged the middle ages, is unknown among us. The redemption of captives, therefore, and the heroic service of the Lazar hospital, are charities of the past. But St. Vincent's many-sided ministries survive. His spiritual children, the Lazarist priest and the "Grey Sister," with all the works of love they have inherited from him, may be said to be co-extensive with the Catholicity of the Church itself.

How splendid a list is recorded of their great Father's claims on the gratitude of every time and place "There was no form of human misery to

which he did not bring fatherly aid. The faithful who were groaning under the Turkish yoke, infants exposed to perish, untoward youth, maidens in peril, uncloistered nuns, fallen women, felons condemned to the galleys, sick pilgrims, disabled workmen, lunatics, mendicants without number, he received and charitably tended, by almsgiving, and by institutions which remain to this day. To Lorraine, Champagne, Poitou, and other parts devastated by plague, famine, and war, he administered relief during a long period. He founded many pious sodalities, to seek out and minister to the afflicted; among others, the celebrated association of married ladies, and the congregation, widely extended, and known as the Sisters of Charity. His efforts also established the Sisters of the Cross, of Providence, and of St. Genevieve, for the education of the weaker sex." Again: "He laboured indefatigably, even to extreme old age, in evangelizing the poor, especially of the rural districts; and to this apostolical work he bound himself, and also the members of the Congregation which he founded under the title of Secular Priests of the Mission, by a distinct perpetual vow, confirmed by the Holy See. The pains he took to promote discipline among the clergy are attested by the foundation of the greater seminaries, frequent conferences on sacred subjects among priests, and the Spiritual Exercises given before ordination. To this last purpose, as well as to retreats for the laity, he

wished the houses of his Institute to be open without reserve. For the extension of the faith and practice of religion he sent evangelical labourers, not only into the provinces of France, but into Italy, Poland, Scotland, Ireland, and also to heathen parts, and as far as the Indies. On the death of Louis XIII., whom he had assisted in his last moments, he was summoned to the Ecclesiastical Council by Anne of Austria, Queen Regent, and mother of Louis XIV. Here he most sedulously provided for the appointment of the worthiest persons to bishoprics and abbasies; for the extirpation of civil discords and private combats, and of emergent errors in religion, which he held in abhorrence so soon as he became aware of them; and for the observance by all of due submission to the decisions of the Holy See." *

Nothing remains to be added but the expression of an earnest wish that the spiritual sons of such a Father, in what may almost be called the third order of his Congregation, may find a place and a work among us; and that many priests, of the zeal and interior life which distinguished the martyred Henri Planchat, may be sent by the Lord of the vineyard to cultivate our waste places, till "the wilderness shall rejoice, and shall flourish like the lily." †

W. H. A.

* Roman Breviary, July 19.

† Isaias xxxv. 1.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Church of Paris has in recent times borne renewed witness to the faith. Paris, the chief hot-bed of revolution for the whole world, the apostle of toleration and free-thought, the furious champion of liberty of conscience and freedom of worship, has, during the last hundred years, rivalled Japan and the Corea in the number of martyrs wherewith she has enriched the Church; martyrs whose heroism is not unworthy of comparison with that which shed lustre on the early ages of Christianity. Since 1789, two of her Archbishops have suffered persecution and exile, and the throne of St. Denis has been dyed with the blood of three others; the last victim put to death out of hatred to religion did not perish alone, for twenty-two priests were offered in sacrifice at the same time. Scarcely had Mgr. Darboy succeeded in collecting the sacred relics of the bishops and priests who fell in the massacres of September 1792, and depositing them in the crypt of the Carmelite Church, than he in turn fell a victim, not to the blind fury of a maddened populace, but to the cold-blooded hatred of atheists, who logically carried out the

maxims of social revolution. The episcopate, the secular clergy, religious orders, teachers, missionaries, those engaged in parochial work, and those whose sphere of labour lay principally in the pulpit and confessional, all grades and offices in the Church, in a word, were represented in this scene of slaughter and bloodshed; and that nothing might be wanting to complete the hecatomb, the charitable institutions of Paris, so numerous in the present day, had their representative too amongst the slain, in the person of M. l'Abbé Planchat, the Chaplain of the *Patronage of St. Anne* for apprentices and young workmen, founded by the Society of St. Vincent of Paul for the Faubourgs, St. Antoine, Charonne, Ménilmontant, Belleville, &c. There was nothing remarkable about this poor religious, one of a small community, not long founded and as yet but little known, to account for his being selected as one of the hostages; the only crime of which he could be accused was that he was a priest, and had devoted his life to the workmen of Paris, to the poor, and the children of the poor. It was on account of his apostolic labours alone that he was put to death; and put to death too on the very spot where he had worked indefatigably for nearly ten years. In fact on his way to execution, he was led through the midst of the very people who had been the witnesses of a zeal and devotion almost unparalleled in Paris since the days of that humble priest and illustrious Saint, Vincent of Paul. Thus he had to endure one especial and poignant pang which his companions in martyrdom were spared, namely, that of being put to death by those whom he most dearly loved,

and to whose welfare his life had been devoted ; like our Lord, he might have said to his executioners, " Many good works I have showed you from my Father, for which of those works do you stone me ? "

It is not for us to anticipate a decision which belongs to the Church alone ; but if the priests lately put to death can claim the palm of martyrdom, surely the humble subject of this memoir, although the last of the victims, if judged according to the place he held in the ranks of the clergy, must have been among the first admitted into glory by Him Who came on earth to preach the Gospel to the poor, and Who has promised the kingdom of heaven as the recompense of a cup of cold water given in His name.



CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

MARIE-MATHIEU HENRI PLANCHAT was born at Bourbon-Vendée, on November 2nd, 1823. His grandfather, a simple artisan, was the means of saving fourteen priests during the first Revolution. His eldest son intended to embrace the ecclesiastical state, and studied for it, aided by the generosity of a pious aunt ; but later on, not finding in himself the requisite vocation, he entered the magistracy. M. l'Abbé Rocher, chaplain to the King, one of the priests whose lives had been saved, became a zealous patron to him, and brought him under the notice of Duke Mathieu de Montmorency, who died in the odour of sanctity one Good Friday, while tending the sick in the Hotel-Dieu. M. Planchat, having been Justice of the Peace at Compiègne, where he married, was appointed Judge of the Civil Tribunal at Bourbon-Vendée, and afterwards held the same office successively at Chartres and at Lille. He was the father of four children ; two daughters, both of them nuns, one a Sister of Charity, now at Constantinople, the other a religious of Notre-Dame at Moulins ; and two sons, the elder of whom was the Abbé Planchat, the subject of this memoir. In memory of his pious patron, M. Planchat had his firstborn baptized by the name of Mathieu, and it may be remarked that the Abbé Planchat, arrested on Holy Thursday whilst labouring amongst the poor, died on a

Friday, like his venerated namesake. In 1847, M. Planchat was appointed President of the Civil Tribunal at Oran, but was almost immediately afterwards deprived of this post, for having, upon his arrival, set up a large crucifix in the court of justice on his own responsibility. At the time of his death he was Councillor in the Court of Algiers.

The exemplary life we are about to relate was ushered in by a childhood enriched with the choicest gifts of grace, and worthy to compare with that of some of the greatest saints. The special favours bestowed upon this servant of God have been brought to our knowledge by his sister (the one now a Sister of Charity at Constantinople) who was the companion and confidant of his early years, until, at the age of fourteen, he was sent to a public school. We will lay these simple and touching memorials word for word before the pious reader, who will doubtless be grateful to us for the insight thus afforded him into the hidden life of one of those chosen souls, whom God Himself fashions with a view to His future glory and the edification of the Church.

“Even from his earliest childhood it was manifest that a special blessing rested upon the little Henri, for his piety was not less striking than the precocious intelligence which caused him to astonish all around by remarks singularly in advance of his age. For instance, one day whilst waiting in church for some ceremonial to begin, he was found going round the Stations, as he had frequently seen his grandmother do, and when told to come and sit by his parents: ‘As soon as I have done I will,’ he answered gravely; ‘let me finish the Stations first.’ At this time he was not three years old.

“To be allowed to go to church was the greatest reward that could be held out to him; he could be induced to do anything by the promise to take him there, or deterred from anything by the threat of being deprived of this pleasure.

Having heard his mother speak of the church as the house of God, he invariably gave it this name ; and as if he understood all that is implied in these words, when there he habitually restrained his great natural restlessness, conducting himself in a manner which won the admiration of all who saw him. He either kept his eyes fixed upon the altar, or else attentively watched the ceremonies, which he tried to imitate afterwards at home ; and this he did with a gravity of demeanour beyond his years, far removed from the frivolity so often to be remarked in children.

“ ‘ How I should like to see God ! ’ he would sometimes say to his sister ; ‘ people say that good children will see Him ; I have been very good, so I thought I should see Him, but I have not. Have you ever seen Him, Nini ? ’ he would ask, addressing his sister by a pet name he had given her. And her negative replies left him still wondering and unsatisfied.

“ One always likes to talk about what one loves ; thus from a very early age it was a delight and a reward to him to learn the Catechism, and hear it explained by his excellent mother, who never allowed any one else to teach it to her little son. ‘ Mamma, ’ he used to exclaim eagerly, ‘ I have been very good, now tell me something about God ; ’ and then, fetching his little chair, he seated himself at her feet, often interrupting her by his natural impatience, to ask questions or make remarks which would only be suggested by a thoughtful mind. Thus, when on one occasion his mother, explaining to him the mystery of the Incarnation, told him how God had chosen the Blessed Virgin Mary for His mother, Henri suddenly broke in with the words : ‘ What is that you say, mamma ; God has not got a mother ? ’ ‘ Yes, indeed, my darling ; Jesus Christ as Man has a mother. ’ ‘ But, mamma, that is quite impossible ; you told me the other day that God can do all He pleases. ’ ‘ Quite

true, Henri, I say just the same now.' 'Well, then, mamma, I cannot believe it. Have a mother, and do all that one likes! No, no; I am quite sure that if God can do all He pleases, that shows He could not have a mother.'

"Possessed as he was of great natural intelligence, of a love of study, and pious practices, it will readily be understood that Henri, who in his very infancy had longed to see God, looked forward with ardent desire to that happy day when he should be admitted, not indeed to see Him, but to the far greater privilege of receiving Him into his breast. More than once, when looking with holy envy at those who approached the Eucharistic Table, he was heard to exclaim: 'When shall I too be permitted to receive this Saving Victim?' It need hardly be added that the year of his First Communion was for him an epoch of redoubled fervour.

"His father, who appreciated the great importance attaching to an act which often has an influence on the whole future life, allowed Henri to make a preparatory retreat in the house of the Christian Brothers. There he attracted special notice on account of his modesty, his fervour, and the scrupulous exactness with which he observed every point of the rule, particularly that part which relates to silence, generally the one most difficult for children of his age to keep. His modest and recollected exterior, equally free from restraint and from affectation, his kindness and charity towards his companions, made so powerful and salutary an impression upon the latter, that the good Brothers confessed that Henri had done more by his example than they could effect by their words, and that they had never before succeeded so easily in restraining the volatile minds of their youthful charges. Indeed, the director of the house went to call on M. Planchat for the express purpose of thanking him. He congratulated him

on being the father of such a son, adding that Henri had been like an angel, bringing blessings to the house, and begging that he might be allowed to visit them from time to time for the edification of their pupils. This occurred at Lille, in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene. Henri's devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar increased day by day, and as he was too young to communicate as often as he would have liked, he endeavoured to compensate for this deprivation by the frequency of his visits to the Blessed Sacrament. From that time he made it a rule to hear Mass every day, allowing nothing but illness to prevent him. And how did he hear Mass? To see him, his every attitude expressive of the feelings of his heart, was enough to inspire the coldest with devotion; his lively faith enabled him to behold the Adorable Victim immolating Himself upon our altars, and to offer himself as a holocaust in return. This offering of himself doubtless was but the prelude of that more complete immolation which God would require of him in after years, and helped not a little to obtain for him from heaven the abundant graces subsequently poured down upon him.

“But it was at Mass and at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament that his piety showed itself most specially. He would kneel upright and motionless, with his eyes closed or else fixed upon the tabernacle, so absorbed in God as to be unconscious of what went on around him. ‘What happiness it is,’ he sometimes remarked to his sister, ‘to feel oneself in the immediate presence of God! If people did but know this by experience, the churches would be too small, and we should never see them empty.’

“The opportunity of serving Mass was a pleasure which he never allowed to escape him. The reverence and devotion he felt was expressed in his manner, so much so that when at Lille during his holidays, one of the parish priests, to

whom Henri was a stranger, stopped his sister, whom he had seen coming out of church with him, to ask whom that pious young man was, and where he had learnt to serve Mass so devoutly. Henri was then between fifteen and sixteen, and went to Communion three times a week.

“His habitual devotion to the Blessed Sacrament showed itself in a thousand ways. If he went for a walk with his parents, he always contrived to turn their steps in the direction of some village church, and to find an ingenious excuse for obtaining their consent to pay a visit to the lonely inhabitant of the Tabernacle, and *rest* for a short time in that sacred presence. No sooner did he catch sight of the wished-for church tower than he hurried forward with his sister, often running on to see whether the door was open, and if, as is often the case in villages, he found it closed, after making an act of adoration to the Divine Saviour, whom no barrier could conceal from the keen eye of his faith, he made inquiries as to where he could obtain the key, which was never refused him. And when he got inside the church, his beaming countenance revealed the triumphant joy of his heart, as he doubtless said within himself: ‘I have found Him Whom my soul loveth.’ One of his favourite psalms was: *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua Deus*; and he also especially loved to sing the *Ave Verum*, dwelling with peculiar emphasis on the last words: *Esto nobis prægustatum mortis in examine*. Perhaps the privilege he enjoyed of communicating shortly before his execution was granted him as a reward of the fervour with which he used to utter those words.

“He who loves God loves Mary. It is impossible to speak too strongly of the tender and true devotion Henri felt for this loving Mother, whom he always called his *good Mother*, speaking of her in a manner which showed what were his feelings towards her. When quite a tiny child he

used to bow his head and kiss his little hand to every statue of our Lady which he passed in the streets (and at that time there was scarcely a street in Lille without several niches containing an image of the Blessed Virgin). In his country walks he would gather flowers and make nosegays to place in the little chapels one so frequently meets with by the roadside ; and kneeling down there with his sister, he would say the Litany, the Salve Regina, or some other prayer, according to the time he had gained for this purpose by running on ahead. He was fond of reciting the Rosary with his sister, whom he had taught to repeat it after him, in an undertone, even in the streets of Paris, when he went out with her ; and having given her a Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, he made her say it with him every day during his holidays, and further induced her to promise to say it daily, together with the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, a promise she strictly kept until he went to the Seminary. On first beginning this pious practice, he used to draw her attention to certain passages in the Psalms which particularly struck him, in order to teach her to enter into and enjoy them. The reality of his devotion was plainly apparent ; he knew full well that unless we imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin no external practices of devotion are of any avail, but are, on the contrary, rather displeasing in her sight.

“ But we must not pass over in silence his devotion to St. Joseph, in whom, after Jesus and Mary, he placed his whole trust ; or, to speak more correctly, this earthly Trinity, so closely united together by God Himself, was never separated in his thoughts and affections. He took St. Joseph for his patron and his guide in the interior life, and it was impossible to spend an hour in his company without hearing him speak of his beloved director, and strive to inspire others with the confidence in him which

inspired his own breast. He chose a picture of St. Joseph as his parting gift to his sister, when he went to see her before she embarked for Turkey, and ten years later he sent her a leaflet, entitled, 'Association for the perpetual worship of St. Joseph,' having on the reverse side a picture of the saint. He never wrote a letter in which there was not some mention of St. Joseph; and truly the great patron of a good death showed him especial favour, since he obtained for him the privilege of so glorious an end. It is not surprising that under such guidance as this an interior spirit should have been one of the most striking characteristics observable in Henri.

"He saw God everywhere and in all things. There was nothing which did not serve to raise his heart to Him. Whilst passing through the streets of Paris he would say to his sister: 'If one could ask all these people, as they come and go, what is in their thoughts, how many would be able to answer that they were thinking about their soul? Almost all spend their lives as if they had no soul.' When walking out in the country, in all the beauties of Nature he used to admire the greatness of God, and by the touching comparisons he drew between the earthly and heavenly, would lead his sister to elevate her heart in adoring gratitude to that God Whose greatness and goodness are apparent in His works. At night he loved to contemplate the magnificence of the starry heavens. 'If the visible is so fair,' he would exclaim, 'what must the invisible be? When will the glories of heaven be revealed to us? When shall we possess our God, without any fear of losing Him?'

"The marks of affection bestowed on him never made him vain; on the contrary, he always evinced a desire that others should share in them. For instance, Mgr. de Clozel, Bishop of Chartres, who used to honour M. Planchat by frequently coming to his house, charmed with the rare

qualities of mind and heart he discerned in Henri, took a great deal of notice of the boy, whose remarks, full at once of sense and simplicity, greatly delighted him. On these occasions the child never forgot his younger sister, but would run to fetch her, saying to the prelate: 'Please kiss my little sister, too, I am so fond of her; you must bless her as you just blessed me.'

"Henri never used to talk about the places or prizes he had obtained unless actually obliged to do so, and then he invariably mentioned them in the simplest manner possible, and that most calculated to diminish the credit due to him. Some one happening, for instance, during his last year of study, to question him as to how many prizes he had gained, he answered simply, 'Seven.' 'No,' eagerly interposed one of his companions, who chanced to be present, 'you ought to say seven First prizes and the *Prix d'excellence*.' 'Oh,' rejoined Henri, 'there was so very little difference between myself and the boy who got the second prizes, that he deserved the first quite as much as I did. He was not really inferior to me, only he forgot one or two things, and so I came off first.'

"But it was for his charity to the poor above all else that Henri was distinguished from his earliest childhood; it might truly be said of him that his charity was all-embracing and often most ingenious. When little more than a baby, he wanted to give something to every beggar he saw, and for this end was quite ready to make sacrifices; he did not content himself with asking his parents for pence, which they, whilst they did not fail to encourage his generous intentions, yet told him were not a gift from *him*, but from *them*, but willingly gave away his sweetmeats and cakes, slipping into his pocket, whenever he could contrive to elude observation, part of what was on his plate at dessert, to be given to the poor. These secret stores were put aside in

a drawer until opportunity offered itself for their distribution. One day, his sister, rummaging about everywhere, came upon them, and helped herself to a portion. Henri, coming in at the moment, was quite disconcerted on the one hand at finding that his secret had been discovered, and on the other hand at thus losing a portion of his treasures. But quickly recovering himself, he said to his sister : ‘Look here, Nini, I will tell you something ; I saved these things from dessert to give them to the poor who never get them ; I am sure you would do just the same, for you love the poor too, and you see we have all we want, so different to them. Besides, you know, we are always told that what we give to the poor is given to God.’ The ready consent of his sister to the wishes he expressed soon restored his serenity. At College he did just the same as at home ; the poor had a share of all, in fact the whole of his pocket-money went to them as a matter of course, for he denied himself the most innocent pleasures in order to have more to give to the needy.

“I have said his charity was ingenious ; he did not confine himself to giving alms, but loved to render any kind of service to the poor, helping them to the utmost of his power, sometimes even going beyond his power. For instance, on one occasion when a mule had overturned the load of fruit it was carrying, to the great distress of its owner, Henri not only hastened himself to help the man pick up the scattered fruit, but enlisted in the good work the services of his sister and even of his father, who gladly lent a helping-hand, thus encouraging by his example the practical charity of his son. Thanks to his help, the load was soon replaced on the mule without having suffered any great injury or diminution.

“If he saw some field-labourers who seemed tired out with picking up potatoes or beans : ‘You sit down and rest

a little,' he would say to them, 'my sister and I will go on with your work.' Again, he would join a group of gleaners in order that they might finish their task sooner, saying sometimes to the farmer's men : 'Leave a few more ears of corn for these poor people.'

"But his charity did not rest content with the relief of temporal necessities ; he loved to show the poor children whom he met on his country walks how to make the sign of the Cross, and to teach them short prayers, the catechism, and above all the principal mysteries of the faith ; thus early beginning to train himself for those apostolic labours in which his future life was to be spent.

"I cannot close these recollections without mentioning his remarkable truthfulness ; indeed his good and pious mother used often to say that nothing in the shape of a lie had ever crossed his lips. No sooner had he done any childish piece of mischief than he would run to accuse himself of it, lest any one else should be unjustly blamed. If questioned, he always answered in the most straightforward and ingenuous manner, even when he saw plainly that he was incurring the risk of punishment. He used gently to reprove his sister, who, being less conscientious than himself, did not always act in a similar manner. 'Oh, Nini !' he would say, 'why did not you say outright at once that you had done that ? it is much better to be punished than to tell a lie, because lying is a sin.' On more than one occasion he submitted to punishment although quite innocent, from the fear that, if he exculpated himself, the real offender might perhaps tell a lie to get off."

He did not leave home until he was fourteen, when his parents placed him at St. Stanislaus' College, under the able direction of M. l'Abbé Buquet, afterwards Bishop of Parium, in whom he found a lifelong friend and protector. Planchat was only three years at this College, but his remembrance

is still cherished by his professors and fellow-students. His quick intelligence, untiring application, and excellent memory, secured him success in his class and at the *grand concours* ; whilst his obedience, piety, and kindness of heart won for him universal esteem. Nevertheless he was not a favourite with his comrades, on account of some oddities of manner and a certain irritability of temper, which, although he was ever ready to apologize and acknowledge himself in the wrong, caused him too frequently to be made the object of disagreeable practical jokes. His teachers were, however, extremely sorry when he was removed to a College at Vaugirard, then under the direction of M. l'Abbé Poiloup, but now under that of the Jesuits, of which Father Olivaint was for a long time Rector. There Henri, after having attempted the ordinary course of lectures, began his legal studies.

At this College he was quite as much liked by his masters as he was at St. Stanislaus, and got on considerably better with his fellow-pupils. His was not a sentimental piety, resting in sensible devotion and the consolations of religion, and later on, as is unfortunately too often the case, sinking into lukewarmness ; it was no less tender and profound in his riper years than in his childish days, and flourished no less amidst the harassing labours of the apostolate, than when favoured by the quiet life of the College or Seminary. He ever remembered that without continual conflict there can be no true piety, since the Christian life is essentially a warfare. He struggled unceasingly, not so much against the temptations usual to youth, for these were not allowed to assail his soul to any great extent, but against faults which were rather physical weaknesses than moral defects, the failings inseparable from a feeble constitution and somewhat morbid temperament. At any rate they were his cross ; to none

of His faithful servants, whatever the perfection to which they may have attained, does our Divine Master deny the privilege of suffering with Him.

It was whilst at the College of Vaugirard that M. Planchat first joined the Society of St. Vincent of Paul. All the time which his own legal studies and the duties of superintendence which he had accepted, left at his own disposal, was devoted to the poor of the neighbourhood; he undertook the management of the popular library, established under the auspices of the Society, and took a practical interest in the school children. He used moreover to superintend the apprentices who lived in the *Maison de Patronage* established in the Rue du Regard, where he always spent his Sundays, finishing the day by assisting at the devotions of the Archconfraternity in the Church of Notre-Dame des Victoires. It was in this house in the Rue du Regard that he first came in contact with the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, a community then in its infancy, and consisting of but few members, which he was to join later on, immediately after his ordination. But it was under the teaching of a zealous priest attached to the parish of St. Lambert in Vaugirard, M. l'Abbé Parguel, now parish priest of Notre-Dame de la Gare, that M. Planchat learnt the true spirit and real aim of the work in which he was engaging; he then saw clearly that its principal object is to remove the prejudice and ignorance, which, prevailing among the working classes, causes them to shun priests and neglect their religious duties. From this time we may date the real commencement of his apostolic labours.

CHAPTER II.

VOCATION.

THE last three years passed by M. Plachat at the College of Vaugirard were entirely devoted to the study of law and to preparation for entering the Seminary. It would be difficult to fix the precise period at which the idea of offering himself for a priest first entered his mind ; doubtless he had been dedicated to God from his very birth by his pious and exemplary parents. His father's name, well known and universally esteemed, would have easily procured for him a seat on the magisterial bench, or a call to the Bar ; but scarcely had he taken the first steps in his legal career, when he gave up all his prospects for this world in order to enter the Seminary. His papers, dating from 1844 to 1847, in which he wrote down the resolutions made after his weekly confessions, bear edifying testimony to the fact that his progress in Christian virtue had not suffered from his application to study and the part he took in active works of charity. The limits of the present sketch do not allow of more than brief extracts from these pages, which are characterized by the most intense religious feeling, a knowledge of the secrets of the interior life rarely met with in so young a man, and a deep conviction that it was his vocation to be a servant of the poor.

“ For the week beginning August 31 and ending September 7, 1844.

“ Penance : The Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus
once.

“Special Devotion : To seek in my intercourse with the children to do exactly what Jesus Christ would have done.

“Counsel : It ought to be my great object to imitate the life of Jesus Christ. Our Divine Saviour did not rest satisfied with proclaiming His holy law to us ; He was pleased to dwell amongst men, because He knew full well that example is much more powerful in influencing their minds and hearts than precept can ever be. Let me strive to acquire the virtues which He practised, and to improve daily in their exercise. How deep was His humility ! how boundless His charity ! how gentle He was, and at the same time how firm ! I ought especially to aim at reproducing in myself the union of these two virtues, so strikingly combined in Him. He spent His whole life amongst illiterate persons, amongst fishermen. How patiently did he bear with their faults, with their uncouth manners ; how gently did he reprove and correct them ! I have to carry on, although in a very humble measure, the ministry of Jesus Christ ; and I must not only labour to advance my own sanctification, but also to further by every means within my power that of the children placed under my charge. If I am to be of any real service to them, I must never act hastily or upon impulse ; but I must make it my practice before each action to ask myself how Jesus Christ would have acted under the circumstances ; in a word, I must be entirely subject to Him. Occasions will arise when I shall feel hesitation as to the course I ought to pursue, but if I lift up my heart to God, He will not fail to help me, the more so if I can entirely exclude self-love. I must be constant in prayer, and fervently ask God’s assistance in all the little duties of my daily life. By means of prayer I shall obtain more success than by all the plans I may make for myself.

“Resolutions : (1) To recollect myself carefully in the

presence of God on making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and before the commencement of my spiritual reading. (2) Never to enter upon duties of superintendence (or surveillance) without a few previous words of prayer, and never give an order without first pausing to raise my heart to God. (3) To keep the rules of temperance I have prescribed for myself, and to say a special *Memorare* before going to sleep."

Some striking passages, showing how lofty a conception he had formed of the state to which he aspired, and revealing the presentiment he felt of some great sacrifice to be required of him in the future, occur among these records, the outpourings of Henri Planchat's heart, in which he lays open to view the secrets of his inmost soul.

"For the week ending May 15, 1846.

"During the course of this week I will often think how the trials of this life are the price wherewith the happiness of heaven must of necessity be purchased. Our Lord revealed His glory to His Apostles on Mount Tabor in order to prevent them from being too greatly scandalized by the ignominy of His Passion; but on coming down from the mountain, He charged them not to speak of what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen again from the dead. God gives us too a foretaste of heavenly bliss for our encouragement, but we must not forget that before we can taste it fully we must have risen again from the dead, that is to say, we must have suffered death with Christ, and lived a life like His, which will prepare us for a happy death.

"For the week ending April 4, 1846.

"Who can look, if it be but for once, upon Jesus hanging on the cross without feeling himself stirred up to

make some return for such boundless love? . . . Should God at some future time grant us the privilege of receiving ordination, well will it then be if contemplation of the Sacred Wounds has long since taught us to hate ourselves, and *to be ever ready to offer ourselves up for the salvation of others; 'bonus pastor animam suam ponit pro ovibus suis.'*

▲

“For the week ending November 28, 1846.

“I have allowed the tree of charity planted by the hand of God in the garden of my soul to droop and wither; yet He expects it to bear fruit not only for myself but also for others; He wishes that its leafy branches should not only cast their shade over my own soul, but should also afford a resting place and shelter for the birds of heaven. *What are the designs of God concerning me?* When shall I begin to correspond to them in good earnest? Let me take courage, and increase in fervour. A careful gardener daily waters the plant which he can only hope to sell for a trifling sum; whilst we may perhaps yield a harvest worthy to be stored in the granaries of the Most High.

“For the week ending December 12, 1846.

“Let us imitate the Divine Child in His generous sacrifice of Himself, for our Lord already begins to set before us an example of most heroic virtue. Bethlehem is not far from Calvary; the distance between them is one of degree, not of kind; Christ's merits were the same in both, since the will to suffer was identical in each. *Some day God will perhaps require great sacrifices at our hands.* Let us begin betimes to offer up to Him our self-love, our own will, our attachments.”

It was in October, 1847, that M. Plachat entered the Seminary at Issy. We shall see his vocation becoming more definite and more decided at St. Sulpice, that great

training school for the clergy. We shall see how the thought of saving souls, of becoming the apostle of the poor and of little ones, the longing to offer himself up in their service, deeply rooted in his heart whilst still but a levite, assumed larger proportions and greater prominence as he ascended in due course the several steps which led up to the altar, where, as a priest, he was so soon to stand. Thus did this soldier of Christ await in retirement and prayer the hour of conflict, for which he longed with the intense desire of one impatient to dash into the thick of the fight, and wrest from his adversary the souls which this enemy of mankind seeks to destroy. At the same time, filled with the holy joy arising from union with God, he became more and more deeply imbued with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest and Divine Victim. Let us watch the secret process by which this soul, so richly endowed with grace, and so evidently called by God, was prepared to carry out his vocation. The following extracts from the notes written during the retreats he made at the time of his ordinations, will afford us an insight into the marvels of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and of that wondrous work of grace, the moulding of the heart of His priests—

“Minor Orders, December 17 to 24, 1848 (St. Sulpice).

“One often sees people evincing the most sincere and generous devotion, ready to sacrifice their fortune and even their life in order to promote what they term the public good, by means of philanthropy or by the triumph of schemes and systems in which they believe, and shall a priest evince less zeal in his efforts to procure a happiness infinitely greater, a happiness substantial and secure, for the souls of his fellow-men ?

“In these days of ferment and revolutionary excitement, ought I not to be roused to make great exertions for the

salvation of souls, by the sight of the zeal wherewith men pursue projects, some manifestly evil, others indeed apparently useful, but whose real merit exists at most in the imagination to which they owe their being, and the illusions by which they are maintained and cherished.

“How infinite is the responsibility of a priest! how weighty are the obligations and how vast the privileges attaching to his office! There is nothing that can compare with them. All good priests, from St. Paul to St. Liguori, have felt this, and have acknowledged in consequence that their time, their strength, their talents, were not their own, and that to divert them in the least degree to any other use than the service of God and our neighbour, would be an act of sacrilege and robbery.

“I firmly resolve henceforth to devote every moment of time until my last breath to the greater glory of God. It is easy for me to do this in the Seminary, by keeping closely to my rule; but even in the Seminary, much more in the office, whatever that may be, which Divine Providence destines me to fill, there will always be one great obstacle to the fulfilment of this resolution, an obstacle which can be overcome by one means alone. This obstacle is my natural hastiness and impetuosity, and the means, the remedy to be employed, is tranquil union with our Lord and His Blessed Mother. What powerful encouragement does this afford to be faithful in all things, to act promptly whilst keeping ever cheerful and serene! This habit of mind, if acquired at the Seminary, will keep me peaceful and undisturbed in the midst of the agitating distractions inseparable from the life of a priest.

“*Subdiaconate, June 2, 1849.*

“I firmly resolve to watch for and avail myself of every opportunity of promoting oneness of interest among priests

in all that appertains to their sacred ministry, whatever sacrifice of personal feeling, self-love, or natural affection this may cost me; and to further, with hearty good will, any efforts my superiors may make to inculcate brotherly love and concerted action on the body of priests to which I may hereafter belong, since I know this to be indispensable in the present day for combating the wicked, who are leagued together against us, and ensuring the cooperation of the clergy in the good works of the laity, so as to economise the time and strength of both.

“ Unless we act in a true spirit of faith in all our intercourse with our people, we shall gradually get further from the poor, and nearer to the rich, which is exactly the reverse of what we ought to do; we shall imagine ourselves to have fulfilled our duty to the former if we receive them with kindness when they come to us, whereas we ought to seek them out and serve them, just as we should seek out and serve our Lord, Who presents Himself to us in their person.

“ For a long time past grace has been urging me to devote myself to the service of the poor, and to regard them with reverence, in the light of faith. I firmly resolve not to lose a single opportunity of obeying these impulses, and to make it my habitual practice, whenever I speak to a person who is poor, or in a humble station of life, to imagine that I have before me our Lord or the Blessed Virgin. I also determine to act on the advice so often given us, and frequently read the biographies of good priests, above all the life of St. Vincent of Paul, which always had a special attraction for me.

“ *Diaconate, December 23, 1849.*

“ They (deacons) ought to be filled as St. Lawrence was, with fervent charity towards the poor, and burning zeal for the

relief of their temporal wants. One of the chief duties of a deacon is to minister to the members of our Lord in all their needs and necessities with generous faith, rejoicing to make sacrifices and undergo privations for His sake. Actuated by this spirit, he ought to deprive himself of everything not absolutely indispensable, in order to have the more to spend in the service of his Divine Master, yielding up to Him, not his temporal possessions alone, but his very being likewise; so as to know no greater happiness than that of dying for His glory, and even, were it possible, giving himself as food for the hungry.

“Perhaps I have been fancying myself charitable, because I like the external activity of good works. They are far from constituting real charity. True charity is interior; it possesses and pervades the whole soul. Natural activity acts like a poison and destroys the life of charity. How important, then, for me, that God should kindle within me true charity, making it increase and grow continually; for if this sacred flame burns steadily within my heart, its exterior operations will be well regulated, unvarying, without constraint, unobtrusive and yet influential, in a word, they will be perfect. Perfect as far as the instrument employed by a God of love is concerned; for they will have no dissipating influence upon the soul; perfect too as far as our neighbour is concerned, for they will produce all the good results which the mercy of God destined them to effect. Mere natural charity, on the other hand, is subversive of the designs of God; this I have learnt from my own observation, as well as from the remarks of those friends who love me well enough to speak plainly to me. And since our poor human nature has a fatal tendency to instil its subtle poison into works begun under the influences of the Holy Spirit, I will make a resolution to watch over myself most carefully

throughout my whole life in all that I do for the good of my neighbour, so as to check my natural activity as soon as I am conscious that it has come into play; I also resolve to be very careful not to neglect the practice of little mortifications conducive to the same end.

“Priesthood, December 22, 1850.

“When I last went to confession, the good Curé of La Gare told me he saw no doubt at all about my vocation, reminding me, however, at the same time, that there is such a thing as want of correspondence to the call of grace. This is, in other words, precisely what my director said to me with respect to my vocation to join the little community of St. Vincent of Paul. It remains to be seen whether natural liking, either to persons or employments, may not have something to do with my wish to become a member of that Society; whereas, suffering, poverty, and humiliations are what I ought exclusively to seek.

“I resolve, moreover, frequently to renounce these inclinations of nature from my whole heart, make an offering of them to the Blessed Virgin; and often to look contempt, suffering, and poverty in the face, regarding them in the light of so many graces which God has in store for me.”

These edifying records reveal in all simplicity the rich gifts of grace which God showered down upon this faithful soul. During the whole course of his life, amid varying frames of mind, up to his latest breath, we find him such as he shows himself to us in his written resolutions, ever counting it his dearest privilege to spend and be spent for the sake of his Divine Master and for the salvation of souls. The Apostle whom we shall soon see climbing with unflinching step the *via crucis* of May 26th, is none other than the Seminarist, faithful to his ordination vows, and hesitating

not to consummate by a holocaust of blood, the self-immolation of twenty years. His apostolate was thus only the continuation of his life in the Seminary. The following testimony furnished by the venerable M. Caduc, his director at the Seminary of St. Surplice, may be inserted here as a summary of his most striking characteristics, and a complete confirmation of what has been said concerning him.

“The habitual expression of his countenance,” writes this holy priest, “was frank, calm, and serene, always making me feel it impossible to do otherwise than respect him. Although his mental powers were above the average, yet he invariably appeared to act from supernatural motives when applying himself to study or to any course of reading. From his first entrance into the Seminary, he showed so marked a taste for active works of charity, that some of his fellow-students—unable to see, as I did, how completely this chosen soul did all for God and in God—used to a certain extent to upbraid him with it. This untiring zeal in good works is well known to have been the ruling passion, if we may so term it, of his life; for its sake he trod under foot, with a generosity to my mind nothing short of heroic, all the worldly advantages which might, had he so chosen, have been his; advantages of birth, of fortune, and of the talents Providence had bestowed on him with no sparing hand. But there was something which I, at least, thought equally heroic and far more touching, namely, his constant endeavour to embrace poverty, and practise it all his life long, in order to help the most destitute amongst the poor; never forgetting, however, for a moment, that in comparison with the salvation of their souls, the relief of their temporal necessities was a very secondary consideration.

“What gives me almost the greatest pain (*humanum dico*) is to think that amongst those principally concerned in his death, there were some, perhaps many, of the very persons

for whom in a spirit of anticipation he had already offered up his life. Of all the hostages there is not one whose death I have felt so keenly, not one whom I venture to invoke with as great confidence ; indeed, so perfect is the assurance I feel in this respect, that I have ere now even counselled others to invoke him too. . . . The few words I have said express but feebly the deep and heartfelt veneration which I feel for this holy priest, whom in his lifetime I loved so dearly."

From all this we may gather that the preparation of the Abbé Planchat for the priesthood was as perfect as possible, a fit prelude, in fact, for his apostolic career. He received priest's orders December 22, 1850, and said his first Mass the next day. The day after that, he attained the climax of his wishes by becoming a member of the little community of Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, in order to live and die in the service of the working classes and of the poor in general. The works of charity in which, as a member of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, he had formerly taken part, had implanted within his breast the germs of his special vocation, by bringing him face to face with the misery and destitution of the lower orders. These germs were developed in the atmosphere of the Seminary, for it was especially during his residence there that his piety reached the point of absolute self-abnegation, and his charity assumed proportions which may truly be termed heroic. As he passed through the successive stages of preparation for Holy Orders, his soul glowed more and more fervently with the flame of apostolic ardour ; an ardour which we feel was continually impelling him onward to self-sacrifice of the most perfect possible nature, finally culminating in martyrdom. The last touch was given when he received priest's orders, for it is in the graces belonging to the priesthood, that the secret of a life and death such as his will be found.

The miserable beings who, maddened by rage and blinded by fury, acted the part of his executioners, had doubtless no other reason for putting him to death than that he was a priest; this formed his sole claim to be their hostage and their victim. If the Abbé Planchat, in order to become a priest, renounced all the advantages which this world held out to him, he did this only from love to the lowest class of the people, and it was pre-eminently in his character of a priest that he did so much for them and loved them so well.

CHAPTER III

THE APOSTLE OF THE PEOPLE.

THE community of which the Abbé Planchat, by consent of his director and permission of his ecclesiastical superiors, now became a member, consisted of but four individuals. He was the first priest who had joined this community, and may indeed be considered as one of its principal founders. During his residence at the Seminary he had lost none of his love for the *Patronage*, nor for the holy fellowship which forms so close a bond of union between the members of St. Vincent of Paul, in their common devotion to the cause of charity. Indeed, so forcibly was he attracted in this direction, that a scruple thence arose in his mind; he was afraid of becoming too fond of his brethren and of the work in which they were engaged, like that good Sister of Charity, who delighted St. Vincent of Paul by confessing one day that she loved the poor too well.

Providence had provided the small community with a quiet home, where it could be more completely formed than amid the stir and bustle of the house in the Rue du Regard, the centre of their active work. A rather spacious

house had been given to the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul at Grenelle, then a suburb of Paris. Thither they had removed in May, 1847. In that peaceful retreat they were accustomed to meet when the charitable labours of the day were ended, glad to find themselves alone with one another, alone with their own hearts, alone with their God. Shortly after, on St. Teresa's day, October 15, 1849, our Lord vouchsafed to come and take up his abode among them, in the tabernacle of their humble oratory. Before long, the members of the little community were so deeply touched by the sight of the destitution prevalent in the quarter whither they had retired to enjoy the quiet needful for their spiritual life, that they could not resist the temptation of beginning, in their retreat at Grenelle, some of the works of charity they carried on in the heart of the Metropolis. The course of time saw them establishing there in succession, the confraternity of St. Vincent of Paul, a popular library, a *Patronage* for apprentices and schoolboys, a catechetical class for adults who had not made their First Communion, and, finally, a soup kitchen.

The working population, which had been led to settle in the plain of Grenelle by the large factories erected there, and the comparative lowness of rents, offered a vast field of exercise to the zeal of the Abbé Planchat. All the thousands who had been carried onward by the tide of emigration, which set so strongly in the direction of great cities, had for the most part acquired the habits of a religious life in their native villages. But Sunday labour, the excitement of the workshop, and the examples of their neighbours, had led them gradually to drift into neglect of their religious duties, without any definite act of hostility to religion itself. Such was, speaking in general terms, the moral condition of the working classes in the neighbourhood of Paris twenty years ago; owing to the fatal in-

fluence brought to bear on them, they have changed greatly for the worse since that time. It was at the period to which we refer, that the labours of the Abbé Planchat amongst them were crowned with such striking success. They could not, they alleged, find time to go to their priest in the church ; the Abbé Planchat undertook to seek them out in their own homes. We find him exploring the low and thinly-peopled districts by the water-side, visiting the most out-of-the-way places, even the filthy slums in the Rue Croix-Nivert. Shabbily dressed like the people he sought, with a pleasant smile and kindly familiarity, he listened to the grievances of all, in order the better to gain a hearing for his advice when his own turn to speak should come, offering, moreover, practical help and assistance of every kind, and being universally welcomed as the workman's special friend and pastor.

Nor did he allow himself to be discouraged on occasionally meeting with a cold reception at some house whose inhabitants were not too well disposed towards him. The medals, pictures, and little books, a store of which he never failed to carry with him for distribution to the children, succeeded ere long in gaining admittance for him everywhere. His visits almost invariably produced the happiest results, and oftentimes most glorious fruits, one conversion generally proving the means of bringing about another.

Having exerted himself to obtain the blessing of the Church upon the union of two persons who had contracted a civil marriage, he found himself immediately afterwards with half-a-dozen similar cases on his hands ; in fact, he continually had more than a hundred such marriages before the Society of Saint-Régis. When some young workman made his long-deferred First Communion, M. Planchat would avail himself of the opening thus afforded, to induce the father and mother of the young man to fulfil the Easter

precept, or to get some aged grandparent to go to confession, after having neglected this duty for forty or fifty years. Thus, under the fertilizing influence of the zeal displayed by the young priest, who had just associated himself to the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, the good works begun by them had found rapid development, and had borne fruits surpassing the most sanguine anticipations. The Brothers saw plainly that if the evangelization of the working classes was to make real advancement, the initiative work of the layman must no longer be carried on independent of the graces attaching to the sacred ministry of the priest; the united action of the two appearing indispensable, and manifestly in accordance with the designs of Providence. Just when these good works were progressing most satisfactorily, the Divine Master, doubtless with the purpose of trying the faith of His servants, saw fit to deprive them for a time of the help He had given them, as if to make them appreciate all the more the value of it. The Abbé Planchat's health gave way; urged on by his zeal, he had undertaken more than his strength, already weakened by the sedentary life of the Seminary, could bear; at last he was obliged to break off his work and seek rest and renewed vigour under the cloudless skies of Italy. This was a severe blow to him; and not to him alone, but also to the community of which he was a member, and to the little flock he had so recently gathered out of the wilderness. His banishment did not, however, last more than a year, thanks to the intercession of the Blessed Peter Claver, the Apostle of the Negroes, to whom he had a great devotion. In April, 1853, having completely recovered his health, he returned to Grenelle, and resumed his ministerial functions, giving a fresh impetus to the work by establishing the Confraternity of the Holy Family. Shortly after the parish priest placed the *Patronage* for young workwomen under his charge; this institution,

already of no small importance, grew and increased rapidly under his watchful care, its influence extending to the young people of both sexes and to all the members of their respective families, thus embracing, if we may so speak, the whole of the working population within its range of action.

All these charitable institutions, of which he was the life and soul, mutually aided one another, each being, in fact, the completion of the rest. "His position as director of the Confraternity of the Holy Family," says the pious foundress of the *Œuvre* for workgirls, in a letter recently addressed to us, "increased his influence in families, by bringing him into contact with the parents of the children. He used always to give an instruction at the *Patronage* on Sundays, and he perfectly understood the art of making these simple discourses interesting to all, and of adapting them to the comprehension of the young workwomen and apprentices. He invariably contrived to introduce some practical lesson, doing this in so charming a way that all his hearers were delighted to receive his advice, and did their best to profit by it. Besides these general instructions, he was in the habit of presiding at the meetings of *Bon Conseil*, a guild for workgirls, founded by Mgr. de la Bouillierie as a special feature in the system of *Patronages*, and modelled after the pattern of the lesser Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. How well he knew how to stir up the zeal of the young girls, and teach them to aim at their own sanctification whilst doing good to others! Various were the charitable deeds he led them to perform, such, for instance, as assisting families in great poverty, or aged and infirm women of good character, visiting their companions when ill or absent, and helping the Lady Superintendent at the Sunday Meetings by cheerfully undertaking the various little duties intrusted to them. M. l'Abbé Planchat succeeded in making this guild eminently useful; in fact it has

ever been the mainstay of the *Patronage*. He possessed the art of infusing into it that spirit of St. Vincent of Paul with which he himself was so highly gifted, and in which the work may truly be said to have been founded."

It would be no easy task to give an account of the apostolate of the Abbé Planchat, which extended over a period of about eight years. If it be asked what in the present day constitutes the work of the missionary priest in a Christian country, we must reply that it consists ordinarily of a course of sermons, preached during a given time in a given place, which he leaves when they are ended. This method of carrying on missionary work suffices, in country districts where the faith still retains its hold over the people, to draw together great numbers; but in large towns, where the life of faith is almost extinct, the priest giving the mission, whatever may be his zeal and his talents, can only succeed in attracting a limited audience, composed of those who are already leading a more or less Christian life. Unbelief is rife among the lower orders, and they turn a deaf ear to their pastor's voice. The great bulk of the population never cross the threshold of our churches, and almost all efforts to draw them thither prove futile. The Abbé Planchat was little known as a preacher, although he possessed all the qualifications which would have enabled him to shine in the pulpit; in fact, he never preached in churches, for he knew only too well that the workmen would not come there to hear him. It was in the chapels of the different charitable institutions that he was to be heard, delivering familiar discourses, of which the catechism formed the invariable subject. His Advent and Lent courses were preached from door to door, as he went about seeking sinners in their own homes. He was essentially the apostle of the fireside, and his congregation was not the same which filled the parish church; his mission was exclusively directed to those who

were seen no longer within the sacred edifice, and the aim of all his exertions was to bring them there once more. How can the labours of a life like his be described? A six weeks' mission in some parishes of our large towns fails to produce as many conversions as would result from a single day spent by him among the hovels of the Avenue St. Charles. Each of these conversions had the interest of a romance. An account of the most remarkable only among them would fill volumes, whilst many are known to God alone. Of the greater part no record has been preserved; some, however, have escaped oblivion, and of these a few will be laid before the reader. Those selected are not perhaps the most striking, but they will suffice to convey a tolerably correct idea of the ministerial work of the Abbé Planchat, and the fruits which resulted therefrom.

It was about nineteen years ago that a young couple in a village of the diocese of Séez were, in consequence of a disagreement with their priest, married before the civil authorities, without any subsequent religious ceremony. This rendered it impossible for them to remain in their native place, and they removed to Paris, where the wife, troubled by remorse, tried hard to overcome her husband's inveterate antipathy to priests. After a time he appeared to yield to her wishes; but it was necessary for him to go to the priest of Auteuil, by whom his wife had been most kindly received, and this he obstinately refused to do. Now it happened that the poor woman, having obtained employment in a laundry at Grenelle, worked in the same room with two girls belonging to the *Patronage* of which the Abbé Planchat was chaplain. She could not help remarking how well they behaved, how modestly and bravely they bore the ridicule and coarse ribaldry of their companions; the disheartened stranger felt she could trust them, and taking the elder of the two aside one day at dinner-time she said, "I wish I

could see Mdlle. P——, the directress of the *Patronage*; I have wanted to speak to her for a **long** time. She is said to be very kind; do you think she would consider me troublesome if I went to her?"

The young workwoman arranged the desired interview, and the poor woman soon found herself face to face with the directress. With considerable embarrassment she began:

"Might I venture to ask you something ma'am? I should like to have a scapular; can I get it without going to confession first?"

"I will inquire whether you can; but what suggested this good idea to you?"

"It occurred to my mind two years ago, when I was ill and out of spirits, but when I got better I thought no more about it. Now I have a bad foot; I have tried all manner of remedies, but nothing does it any good. I have been kept away from work by it several times, and I am afraid I shall soon be laid by altogether; I cannot help fancying that if I got the scapular it would cure me."

Mdlle. P—— laid the matter before the parish priest, and he agreed to invest the woman with the scapular, without requiring her to go to confession first. Before many days had past her ailment entirely disappeared, and the afternoon of Easter Day found the grateful woman kneeling in the confessional. Before she began her confession, the Abbé Planchat asked if she were married.

"I was married before the registrar, not in church. If you could only persuade my husband."

"I will come to your house this evening to see him; he will not be out with his horse and cart to-day."

The evening came, and with it the Abbé Planchat; but the man was not at home. The time spent in waiting for his return was not wasted, for during the interval a whole chaplet was recited for his conversion at the foot of a neat

and nicely decorated image of our Lady, occupying a conspicuous place in ~~the~~ humble apartment. At last the man made his appearance; strongly urged by his visitor, he wavered; finally he bargained for delay, on the plea that he must put by money enough to purchase a dress and wedding-ring. Providence ordained that this delay should be much shorter than was intended; about ten days from that time, the man, who was a carter, was riding a horse home from water about seven o'clock in the morning, when the animal, suddenly backing against some timber, fell, placing his rider in imminent danger of being crushed to death. He escaped, however, with the exception of a severe contusion of the leg, which obliged him to keep his bed for a few days. The Abbé Planchat turned this to account, and went to see him. Finding that he had almost forgotten how to say his prayers, he taught them him afresh, giving him a *Summary of the Christian's faith and practice* to read. Ten days more, and the man was seen assisting at the Abbé Planchat's Mass; afterwards, accompanied by his wife, he went to the parish church, to receive the blessing of God upon their union. On the following Sunday, the woman, and the friend who had introduced her to the *Patronage*, went together to Communion. The former is now the apostle of the laundry where she works.

One bitterly cold winter's night, when the snow was on the ground, the Abbé Planchat had gone to the farthest end of the Plain of Issy, by the waterside, to administer the last sacraments to a poor boat-woman who was dying. Midnight struck, and he had not yet returned home. It was snowing heavily; at length he appeared, wet through and half frozen with cold, bringing with him a soldier who had lost his way, and an unfortunate workman who had been unable to obtain shelter, both of whom must infallibly have perished with cold, but for the charitable kindness of the

Abbé Planchat. After they had warmed themselves and had something to eat, he provided them with shelter for the night.

On another occasion, he went to the humble abode of a dying man, whose soul he knew to be in even more hopeless case than his body; despite prolonged entreaties, he was refused admittance to the sick room, violent and threatening language being employed to compel him to leave the house, which he did at last with a heavy heart. It was already ten o'clock at night, and he knew the sufferer's life to be quickly ebbing away. The night was cold, the doors of all the adjacent houses were closed: he could not bear to go away out of reach of a possible summons; what was to be done? The zealous missionary did not hesitate long. Seating himself on a milestone not far from the door, he began to recite his Rosary for the salvation of the soul now trembling on the brink of eternity. Midnight found the humble and courageous priest still there; suddenly a woman rushed from the house, in great apparent agitation. M. Planchat hastened up to her; she begged him to come at once to the sick man, who was now asking for a priest. With joyful alacrity he ascended the stairs, down which he had passed but a few hours before with sad and reluctant step; he heard the dying man's confession and gave him the last sacraments, remaining with him until the spirit so lately cleansed from its guilt, resigned itself anew into the hand of its Maker.

On returning from such expeditions, he was often in a state of complete exhaustion. One evening he had only just come in when another sick-call was announced. He immediately set out, taking with him as his guide the child who had brought the message: before he had gone far he fainted and fell down by the wayside. The child attempted to raise him, but could not succeed in doing so, until some

passers-by coming to his assistance, carried the Abbé Planchat into an adjacent house. As soon as he came to himself, he went on his way again.

Hearing one of the National Guard call him an old devil, he turned and said to him: "The devil, my good man, has done us a great deal of harm; but so far as I know, I have never done you any."

The wife of a workman came to him one day to ask for relief; "If you are in want," he replied, "it must be the fault of your husband, who spends all his earnings on drink." Then, taking possession of the two children whom the mother had brought with her, he added: "Go, and send your husband to me, I shall not give up your children until he comes for them." In due time the man appeared, received a severe lecture, and ended by going to confession.

It was the Abbé Planchat's habit to recite his breviary when on his way to the sick; in winter time he used to stop before the wine-shops to read the Antiphons and Collects, to the utter amazement of the revellers within.

"Now then, my little friends," he would say to the children who accompanied him, "let us recite a decade of our Rosary for the sick person I am going to see." The first decade would be followed by a second, that by a third and so on, till they arrived at their destination.

As he was on one occasion passing by a laundry, his shabby exterior, his worn and patched cassock, and somewhat peculiar appearance, excited the laughter and ridicule of the women at work there. Not in the least degree disconcerted, the Abbé Planchat entered the workroom at once, and began distributing to the women the medals, rosaries, and pictures with which he was always provided. He then said a few words to them about religion, in the kindest, most friendly manner, leaving them perfectly astounded by his gentleness and charity. The mistress of

the establishment immediately went out, and running after him, as if to make amends for the bad behaviour of those under her, begged him with tears in her eyes to accept five francs for a Mass to be said for their intention.

The zeal of this fervent Apostle never had anything exclusive about it. All good works were as dear to him as those which were peculiarly his own, and when his cooperation in them was asked, it was no half-hearted assistance he gave. On being requested to preach a retreat at the House of St. Charles, situated between the Faubourg Poissonnière and the Faubourg St. Denis, to some children whose First Communion had been too long postponed, he not only consented to do so, but undertook to provide all the fifty children with suitable clothes and with a breakfast.

At that time the cholera was raging at Montmartre. After the exercises for the retreat were over for the day, and during the intervals between the exercises, the Abbé Planchat, with the full authorization of the parish priest, went about among the cholera patients, visiting them, and giving them the last sacraments, even spending a portion of the night in these labours of love.

One of his visits was to a little apprentice, who had been attacked by this terrible malady at the same time as his father and sister. The Abbé Planchat heard the confessions of all three ; the death of the father, an habitual drunkard, occurred almost immediately, that of his son on the following day, the little girl being the sole survivor of the family. The good Abbé took her to the house of the Sisters, who received her at once.

Another time he went to see a child apparently dying of consumption ; he heard his confession and gave him the last sacraments ; the child recovered, to the intense delight of his mother, who went to confession, and from that time led an altered life.

The parents of another of the apprentices of St. Charles were living in sin, for they were not married. Attacked by cholera, they were brought to the point of death. Hearing of this, the Abbé Planchat hastened to the house, gave them absolution and married them on their death-bed. On returning to the *Patronage*, at two o'clock in the morning, he found he was wanted in the confessional by some workmen, who detained him there till daybreak, when he resumed his labours among the cholera patients, without having allowed himself even the briefest interval of rest.

At another time, during a temporary residence in the same house, the Abbé Planchat was the means of converting a poor woman, a bigoted Protestant, who was married, with civil rites only, to a Catholic who had never made his First Communion. After a three months' preparation, she made her abjuration and was baptized conditionally in the little chapel attached to the house, where, together with her husband, who like herself was far advanced in years, she subsequently made her First Communion, was married and confirmed. Thus, through his instrumentality, this aged couple received all the sacraments of the Church, except Orders and Extreme Unction, in the course of less than a week.

A young men's association had just been set on foot at Metz, but as yet it only consisted of about twenty members, for the founder, M. l'Abbé Risse, not being acquainted with any institution of the sort, was ignorant of the means usually employed to attract young men, retain a hold over them, and above all, promote their sanctification. The good providence of God supplied the want. On his way back from Rome, M. l'Abbé Planchat had a few hours to wait at Metz until the departure of the Paris train. Happening to hear that an association for workmen had been established there, he went to the house, and spent the whole evening

in the company of the young men, who were delighted with him; talking to them, distributing souvenirs among them, and establishing in their midst a little Conference of St. Vincent of Paul. He told them, too, about the good works carried on in Paris, and of the little Congregation of Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, then still in its infancy, said night prayers with them, and finally left them all encouraged for the present and hopeful for the future. On the very next Sunday visiting the poor was begun, an increase of devotion was observable amongst the young men, and the hours of recreation passed more pleasantly; thus the association at Metz may be said to date its real inauguration from that day, as it was then first fairly started on the path of usefulness. Later on the director of this institution placed it on a solid and permanent basis, by himself becoming a member of the Congregation of St. Vincent of Paul; having had his thoughts turned in this direction by the remembrance of the zealous apostle to whose visit he owed so much.

In 1861 M. Planchat was sent by his superiors to Arras, to help a charitable priest, M. l'Abbé Halluin, the founder of a large orphanage for young workmen and apprentices who went to their work in the town every day, returning in the evening to the house, which supplied the place of a home to them.

We subjoin a few traits of his daily life during his sojourn at Arras, as given by an eye-witness:

“When he first arrived at the orphanage, the children were just coming out of the chapel; thus he met them all as he went to make his visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and at once spoke to them in the kindest manner, having a friendly word for each; then, standing at the door of the vestibule, he made the sign of the Cross on the forehead of every child as it passed, taking possession, if we may so speak, of the young souls confided to his care. Before he

had been many months at Arras, he became personally acquainted with a great number of poor, with all the communities in the city, besides numerous ecclesiastics and several rich persons, having no other end in view in his intercourse with them than that of helping them all in their various needs and necessities. He also possessed in no ordinary measure the power of exciting the sympathy of the young people and children belonging to his orphanage, on behalf of those more destitute than themselves; with this view he established in the house the Association of the Holy Childhood and that of the Propagation of the Faith. One evening at supper time he brought into the refectory a poor woman with several young children, who said she had not a morsel of food to give her little ones, nor the means of procuring them a night's shelter. All the orphans, moved almost to tears at the woman's distress, directly put into a basket the slices of bread just served out to them for their own supper, and gave them to her.

“He was so fond of children, and had such a nice way of showing his fondness for them, that they invariably felt themselves attracted to him and perfectly at their ease with him; and how well he knew the characters of his dear children and the best means of influencing each one for good! How many were stirred up by him to make their Communion with greater fervour! How many young men learnt to love God through his words and example! It is moreover worthy of remark, that many of those who were formed under his guidance retained ever after something of that fervour in all good works which he was seen to possess in so eminent a degree.

“On one occasion, desirous of leading his hearers to show their love of God by suffering for His sake, he exclaimed: ‘Ah when we stand before the judgment-seat of God, we shall indeed be put to shame on finding how we

have been out-done by holy souls, to all appearance far inferior to ourselves! When at Grenoble, I had under my direction poor women and delicate girls, who for the love of God, had the courage to wet their hands before going to work on a cold winter's morning, and leave them exposed to all the severity of the cold as they went along.' The saintly man did not add, as he might have done, that the flame of Divine love had been kindled in their hearts by none other than himself.

"One day at Arras he had been to sing Vespers at one of the churches of the town, and was returning home with the choir-boys, all of whom belonged to his orphanage. The children had had some fruit given to them, and one of them, finding that a large portion of what had fallen to his share was bad, came up to M. Planchat, complaining that all the worst had been given to him. The good priest made fun of the little grumbler, and taking the rotten fruit, ate it himself with as much relish as if it had been some delicious sweetmeat.

"Another day he was coming back with the choir-boys, when one of them chanced to remark [that his feet sorely needed washing, but that he could not get water from the kitchen for this purpose without special permission. The kind Père Planchat undertook to see to the matter, and went himself to fetch some water and a towel; then taking the boy, he knelt down, took off his shoes and stockings with his own hands, and carefully washed his feet, kissing them with pious faith, reflecting at the same time within himself, that Our Lord suffered His sacred feet to be pierced in atonement for the sins we commit in all our ways.

"Desirous of purchasing a statue of St. Joseph and placing it in the chapel, which as yet was unprovided with any image of his favourite saint, M. Planchat wrote to a lady in Paris, well-known for her liberality, asking her to contribute

something for this purpose. In reply she sent a handsome donation, but begged at the same time that this application might be the last, as the good priest had already made too many calls on her purse. The Abbé Planchat at once gave orders for a beautiful statue of St. Joseph to be put up in the chapel, and wrote to thank the worthy lady for her generous help, not omitting, however, to remark that he deeply regretted the prohibition she laid on him with regard to any future appeals.

“About a year passed by, and M. Planchat was still at Arras. From time to time he used to officiate at a large church in the town, four boys of the orphanage who were employed there as servers being his companions on these occasions. When the service was over, he would take them for a walk in the environs, letting them talk together as they pleased, whilst he, following a few steps in the rear, occupied himself in reciting his breviary. One day the following discussion arose amongst the children: ‘I mean to be a locksmith,’ said one; ‘and I a carpenter,’ rejoined a second; ‘For my part,’ remarked a third, ‘I do not know what I shall be, but at any rate, I know I should not like to be a priest.’ ‘As for me,’ interposed the fourth, somewhat timidly, ‘I should only be too happy could I hope to be one.’ A debate naturally ensued between the last two speakers, not a word of which was lost by the Abbé Planchat, who remained a silent witness of the scene, no one suspecting that he was listening, least of all the little aspirant to the priesthood.

“The child in question was an orphan and utterly penniless. The Abbé Planchat set to work to procure the funds requisite to enable him to make his studies; he wrote to several rich persons whom he knew in Paris, one sent him twenty francs, another forty, a third fifty; but how far would sums like those go towards defraying the expenses of a poor boy during the long years of preparation for Holy Orders?

It was evidently necessary to find some one who would be responsible for the whole, but the only person he could think of was the pious lady who had forbidden him to ask her for anything again.

“This occurred in the month of March; one day M. Planchat taking the child to the foot of St. Joseph’s statue, addressed the following prayer to the saint: ‘O good St. Joseph, I bring you this child in order that you may show yourself a father to him; he wishes to devote himself entirely to the services of your Divine Son; the only person able to undertake the charge of his support is, as far as I know, the generous friend to whose munificence the honour paid you in this chapel is due. Although she told me to ask nothing more of her, I have written to beg her to adopt this child; it is for you to change her feelings in this respect, and induce her to accede to my request.’ Then taking up the letter, he laid it in St. Joseph’s arms, and after kneeling for a moment in silent prayer with the child, took the letter again and put it in the post. The answer came in a few days, and ran as follows: ‘I consent to adopt the boy you speak of on one condition, namely, that he shall take the name of Joseph at his confirmation.’ Little Edward began his studies from that day forth; later on he was sent to the Seminary, and is now a priest.”

The Abbé Planchat remained at Arras until 1863. His ministerial labours during the two years of his residence there are thus summed up by the Rev. P. Halluin:

“He united all the qualifications requisite more than ever in our own day to make the priest useful to the people, and was an apostle in the fullest sense of the word, ready at any moment to renounce country, worldly possessions, and even life itself.”*

* “Il réunissait ce qui doit faire aujourd’hui plus que jamais le prêtre utile au peuple, l’apôtre dans toute la force du terme, dont les pieds ne tiennent plus à la terre, ni les mains à l’argent, ni la tête aux épaules.”

In 1863, M. Planchat was recalled by his superiors to Paris, and appointed Chaplain of the Institution for apprentices and young workmen lately established under the name of the *Patronage* of St. Anne. This was his last sphere of labour.

The establishment in question is situated at Charonne, at the extreme end of the Faubourg St. Antoine, not far from the site of the Boulevards which in bygone times formed the boundary of the city. It stands in the Rue des Bois, recently constructed in the midst of market gardens; the sky is open there and the air pure, it is the country in fact, although situated in the centre of one of the noisiest and most populous districts of Paris. Above the façade of the house the gable end of a chapel in the Norman style may be seen to rise; the right wing contains the gymnasium and club-rooms for the apprentices and workmen. In the rear of these buildings there is a wide area four thousand mètres in extent.

When the management of the *Patronage* was first confided to the Abbè Planchat, that institution was far from being what it is at present. At that time it was without a chapel, and the apprentices had to attend the services at the church of St. Ambrose or of St. Margaret; but these churches being already too small for the needs of the surrounding population, there was frequently no room in them for the boys. It was one afternoon in July when M. Planchat first arrived to take up his quarters at the *Patronage*, bringing with him a large basket of strawberries, which he distributed himself amongst the children. They were at that time located on the ground-floor of a poor sort of house in the Rue de la Roquette, and were on the eve of removal to a new abode. Their landlord had not awaited the final departure of his tenants before turning some of the rooms they had occupied into stables, in consequence of which, on the

following Saturday, M. Planchat found himself obliged to hear confessions in the very place where the horses were standing. After Mass, a visit of inspection was made to the new house, which, in accordance with the invariable custom of builders, was not ready by the day agreed upon; all was however finished by August 15th. One of the club-rooms was to be used as a temporary chapel; the Confraternity of St. Vincent of Paul gave the altar and benches, M. Planchat, aided by some charitable persons, provided the rest, and what he could not obtain as a gift, he bought on credit, trusting to the good providence of God and the fatherly care of St. Joseph. Assisted by the director and some energetic young men, he passed the whole night in doing what was necessary to prepare the chapel for the ceremonies of the morrow, when it was to be opened and blessed. Every thing had to be done; the floor had to be cleaned, the draperies of the tabernacle to be put up, the room itself arranged and decorated. Early in the morning he blessed this temporary sanctuary, and offered the Holy Sacrifice there for the first time; immediately afterwards he began to hear confessions, the boys coming in great numbers, although the public celebration of the festival was close at hand. At 8.30 the Superior General of the Congregation of Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul came to say Mass there, and gave a short address to the assembled boys.

The Abbé Planchat, thinking of everybody but himself, had forgotten to buy himself a bed. For more than a month he slept on the bare sacking of an old truckle bedstead.

He began by visiting the homes of all the young men under his charge, and a vast amount of moral destitution was revealed to him by these visits. He discovered in many instances, that the parents of his children were only united by a civil marriage; others he found to be living in extreme poverty, in consequence of the great number of children

with which they were burdened ; to the former he applied the spiritual remedies demanded by their case, whilst to the latter he distributed such material relief as his own efforts, aided by Providence, enabled him to bestow. The most gratifying results soon followed upon his exertions ; many households received the Church's blessing, many heretics abjured their errors, many fathers of families, who had neglected the sacraments since the day of their First Communion were converted, and led a new life. Such were the rich and abundant fruits produced by the visits of this zealous apostle to the homes of those under his care.

These out-door occupations did not prevent him from keeping always in view the great work laid upon him, to be a father to the four hundred young men under his direction. He established in their midst the Arch-Confraternity of Our Lady of Victories, affiliating it to the General Association. He also founded another Confraternity, composed of the best disposed among the boys, in order to have a permanent nucleus of pious young men and keep alive in the house a spirit of fervour and religious zeal.

The encouragement of frequent Communion amongst the young men and boys was one of the first objects to which his efforts were directed. Almost every Sunday he gave Communion to about fifty persons during the course of the morning. From six o'clock he was at the disposal of all, only leaving the confessional when the time came to say Mass. Even then he was often late in beginning, as he could not bear making those wait until after Mass whom he had not time to hear before ; he was continually urging the young men to come earlier, and at last made arrangements with the chaplains of Père la Chaise to hear, during Mass, the confessions which he had been compelled to leave unheard. The instructions he gave after the gospel were simple, forcible, practical, and to the point. No

sooner was his Mass ended than he hastened back to his penitents, fearing lest a single one of them should be induced by hunger to abandon his pious intention of communicating. As some of his boys were not able to read, he took care that there should always be a suitable person to prepare them for Communion and see that they made their thanksgiving devoutly. When the children came out of the chapel, he would show them by various kind deeds and words what pleasure and satisfaction they gave him. "These are my courageous children," he would say, "who really love God, and do not shrink from taking a little trouble, bearing a little hunger, and giving up some of their play-time, in order to receive their dear Lord and Master."

He always had some trifling present for them; a little book for one, a cake of chocolate for another; and those whose families were too poor to give them money for their Sunday dinner, received permission to have a cup of coffee or a basin of soup in the porter's lodge, in addition to the collation provided for all in the house.

He succeeded in inspiring the children with so ardent a love for the Holy Eucharist, that many of them performed heroic acts of self-denial in order to partake of that heavenly food. Almost every Sunday some of the apprentices who had been compelled either by an irreligious employer or the necessity of the case to be at their work the early part of the day, would fast until the half-past twelve Mass, in spite of the heat, and the fatiguing nature of their toil. The good Abbé was often known to give Communion as late as 3 p.m. to boys who had been prevented coming to the *Patronage* earlier; and on one occasion an apprentice preferred to remain the whole day without food, rather than take a cup of delicious chocolate, an unwonted luxury, provided for him on the morning in question, for the express purpose of deterring him from going to Communion.

M. Plachat knew how to attract the fathers of the boys to his chapel; he assigned them the best places in the sanctuary, and received them most kindly, interesting himself in all their concerns, inviting them to take some refreshment, or even to have breakfast with him. In this delicate manner, he contrived to give needy artisans a better meal than they could have had at home, and which they wanted to keep up their strength. These invitations were in fact so frequent and so numerous, that not uncommonly when his brethren sat down to table in their turn, they found nothing but empty dishes before them. When his time was not too much engrossed by confessions, he waited on his guests himself, liking thus to become, as it were, their servant; but in the generality of instances he used to show them into the refectory, and then take leave of them, in order to go to others who might be asking for him. As soon as he saw that he had gained sufficient influence over these persons, and that they felt how true an interest he took in them, he would gently bring them round to go to confession, and few of them were ever known to resist his charity.

Having observed the great influx of Italian workmen into the Quartier Charonne, all of whom were as sheep without a shepherd, M. Plachat conceived the plan of a mission to be preached to them preparatory to the Easter Communion. Of this mission more than a hundred workmen availed themselves. At the same time he prepared for their First Communion several young men, who, having left their native land whilst mere children, had grown up without accomplishing this important duty. The success attendant on his efforts the first time encouraged him to do the same on the following year, and then the results were happier still, for besides leading a great number to fulfil the Easter precept, he prepared for their First Com-

munion more than fifty children, the majority of whom belonged to the class of wandering musicians, a class deeply to be pitied, and most difficult to help and instruct on account of their vagrant life, and the bondage in which they are held by their selfish and avaricious masters. In order to place this good work at once on a firm footing, an association was formed at the *Patronage Ste. Anne*, called the *Sainte Famille Italienne*, and on the model of this two other similar associations were subsequently formed in different parts of Paris. Thus it is owing to M. Planchat, as the originator of this good work, that since the period we speak of on each succeeding year a goodly number of Italian children have been admitted to make their First Communion. In fact from that time forth he was a true friend and protector to the Italian poor in that quarter, always ready to procure them assistance, or to help them to get from their native country the necessary documents for the authorization or legalization of their marriages: above all, recalling them to a sense of their religious duties, thus carrying out in regard to these exiles the *compelle intrare* of the Gospel.

The work of grace in the soul of man, so contrary to nature, explains the peculiarities of so many of the saints. The contrast which their manner of acting and their method of viewing things present to the habits of thought and action common among men in general, and even among Christians, often becomes a rock of scandal to their fellow men. We all know how great an amount of opposition and contradiction, even those saints who were most attractive and most remarkable for their gentleness and charity, had to encounter in the course of their lives, for the line of conduct they adopt must ever remain an unsolved enigma to a world which is intolerant of what it is pleased to term virtue carried to an excess, and what St. Paul has fitly

designated as the foolishness of the Cross. But in spite of all the protestations of human wisdom, the saints will continue to astonish the world, and the world and they will never agree. It is this singularity and this opposition which constitute the special and distinctive character of true sanctity in all its various degrees of eminence, and they are specially noticeable in the Abbé Planchat, who was often charged with indiscretion, and with carrying things too far. However, if he sometimes displeased his fellow-men, he pleased God, Who testified the esteem in which he held the holy imprudence of His servant, by bestowing upon him as its reward the glorious crown of martyrdom.

Thus we need have no apprehension of scandalizing or even astonishing the Christian reader, when laying before him a few simple details respecting the sufferings which M. Planchat unconsciously imposed on those who were associated with him in his labours. Sometimes, it is true, these persons resembled the Apostles before the day of Pentecost, not having the strength to watch with him even one hour. The following brief account, far from diminishing the respect due to this faithful servant of God, will only serve to make his generous devotion stand out in stronger relief when contrasted with the weakness, too common to human nature, of his humble-minded and self-accusing companion.

“On my first joining the community,” writes the narrator, “I was sent to fill the post of sacristan and general overseer at the *Patronage Ste. Anne*, and was consequently brought into close contact with our beloved martyr. I will relate a few incidents of our intercourse which impressed themselves on my memory. I arrived at the *Patronage* rather late one Saturday evening. It was the eve of the Immaculate Conception, and I did not

see M. Planchat until supper-time ; he then received me with his usual kindness. I remember two or three strangers sat down to table with us, a priest, and two very recent converts. M. Planchat was called away at least five times during supper, so that he really had not time to finish. Whenever he was absent from the room, the guests took occasion to speak in praise of his charity. 'What a man this Abbé Planchat is,' said the Jesuit Father ; 'he is all energy, all zeal ; a typical son of St. Vincent of Paul. We want a few more like him to work a thorough reform among the artisans of the faubourgs.' And then the recent converts chimed in : 'It is all his doing,' said they, 'that we are no longer Protestants. Ah, what a struggle it cost us before we could resolve on the step!' 'My wife,' added one, 'is to be received to-morrow ; it will be a grand day for us.' We began to set to work, M. Planchat in the confessional, I in the chapel and in the sacristy. There was to be a confirmation on the morrow. The two priests were hearing confessions up to eleven o'clock. I was tired out, as I had worked very hard during the last few days, and would fain have retired to rest, for I was then, as it is to be feared I am still, rather slothful by nature. But when the confessions were done, I had to act as M. Planchat's secretary, and fill sheet after sheet of paper. This went on till about one, the good priest saying from time to time, 'You can go to bed, you know, if you feel tired.' But I always replied : 'No, not yet,' not liking to give any other answer. In fact, how could one go to bed while such a man as that still wanted one ? I said to myself that it would be cowardly in me to leave him.

"At last, about half-past one, I could sit up no longer. The saint noticed my weariness, and desired me authoritatively to go to bed. However, just about two, he came into my room to ask for some matches. I was in bed, but not

asleep. He bade me good night, and went away. A quarter of an hour later he came back again, and said in a tentative manner: 'I have to take the Viaticum to some sick person to-morrow morning about half-past four or five o'clock. I am rather afraid the serving boy will not be here. In that case I may reckon on you, may I not?' 'Oh, yes,' I answered. M. Plachat was as good as his word. At a quarter to five he knocked at my door, summoning me to rise with the words *Benedicamus Domino*. We set off. For some days past the weather had been rainy, and I did not know where to pick my way. Of course I felt it a privilege thus to accompany our Lord and his exemplary servant; nevertheless, at the same time, I could not help feeling a vague depression, a miserable bewilderment amounting almost to distress. In this way we visited five or six aged persons, and did not get home until eight, when Père Plachat was wanted in the confessional, and to say Mass. The day passed in its usual routine. One little incident I must mention, a thing that happened again and again, namely, that when I went into the refectory to breakfast, there was nothing left for me, an unexpected guest having eaten my portion, so that I was obliged to wait about, and alter the hours fixed for my various duties, and then the Director found fault with me, &c.

"In the afternoon there was to be a grand function, for, as I have said, a confirmation was to be held, and all the preparations for it devolved on me. I hardly knew which way to turn, my head seemed quite bewildered, but certainly not with the compliments paid me. It is true that the good Abbé, always the humblest of the humble, made repeated apologies to me, but this only made me feel uncomfortable, and almost unconsciously I felt an irresistible longing to get away from him, just as one feels one really must get out of the reach of the burning rays of the mid-day

sun. My sacristy was all upside down. There was an incessant coming and going of people, either asking to see him, or wanting something or other, till I hardly knew what I was about: the holy oils, the cotton, the sacred vessels, the vestments, all lay about in confusion. At last I could stand it no longer. I got into a corner by myself, turned my pockets inside out, and succeeded in finding a few pence. Determined to make my escape at once, I ran off to the gates to take the diligence. The Director happened just then to be in the porter's lodge; he saw me pass, and endeavoured to detain me; but all in vain. I got out, and made off as fast as my legs could carry me.

“It is only fair to add that as soon as I was myself again, I could think of nothing but the courage and devotion I had recently witnessed, and in spite of my youth and great imperfection, I could not help feeling that the zeal of this holy man utterly condemned my cowardly weakness. An experienced religious, to whom I related the whole affair, gently observed to me that no true soldier ever deserts his post. These words put the finishing touch to the lesson I had received, a sense of shame made me burst into tears. A few days after the admirable M. Planchat most kindly called on me in order to apologize for what had occurred. The brief account I have just given may be considered a fair specimen of his daily life.”

CHAPTER IV.

HIS INTERIOR LIFE.

AT a meeting held at the *Patronage Ste. Anne*, on the first anniversary of M. Planchat's death, one of the most eminent and universally respected of the Paris clergy, M. l'Abbé Le Rebours, parish priest of the Madeleine, spoke in the following terms of that holy martyr, whose fellow-student he had been at the Seminary, and with whom he had afterwards cooperated in his good works: "I know no other priest in Paris who has done as much good and worked as hard for the salvation of souls as the Abbé Planchat."

The truth of these words is evidenced by what we have related, and what yet remains to relate, concerning the labours of this venerated priest, labours which were ever on the increase, and which became almost incredible in their extent as the apostolic career of the saintly man drew nearer to its close. But it is only by making ourselves acquainted with the secret springs of this absorbing activity, and with the spirit in which so many good works were completed almost as soon as they were undertaken, that we can hope thoroughly to understand and appreciate the remarkable life now before us. It is fitting, therefore, that we should take a glimpse of the interior life of the priest and the religious, before we enter upon the recital of these labours, which formed the prelude to the darkest tragedy of even our gloomy days. Only by so doing shall we be able to estimate the immense value of such a life in the sight of

God, or understand that the scene of bloodshed which closed it was no mere unhappy accident, the production of an era of civil strife, but a glorious end, and the well-merited reward of the most heroic virtue.

Let us first pause, and contemplate for a moment the subject of this memoir, already a familiar form, and one to which we cannot but feel ourselves strongly attracted by reason of his simplicity, his courage, and his charity. Let us seek a deeper insight into his heart, and the rich treasures of grace it possessed, treasures of which the recollections preserved to us of his childhood and the records of his life at the Seminary have already afforded us a partial glimpse. Let us see and admire in him, not only a zealous apostle and friend of the poor, but a devout religious, living in complete self-detachment and the closest union with God, having arrived at a high degree of perfection whilst surrounded by the distractions of the world, and engaged in a ceaseless round of such labours as would appear almost beyond the power of man to accomplish.

For this purpose it will not be necessary to enter into very minute details. Those which we here subjoin, taken at random from the recollections of his brethren, will suffice to enable us to penetrate some of the inmost recesses of this chosen soul, and acquaint ourselves with some of its secrets.

It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of how thoroughly his life as a priest was a life of faith. All who ever had the happiness of serving his Mass have borne witness to the fact that, as soon as the Adorable Victim had become present upon the altar in obedience to the voice of this holy priest, the ardour of his faith could no longer be concealed. "O my dear Master! my dear, my adorable Master!"* he would murmur, whilst genuflecting;

* "Ah, mon bon Maître! ah, mon bon, mon adorable Maître!"

and such was the fervent love with which he uttered these words, that they made on the hearer an impression beyond the power of speech to convey. He did not pronounce them once only, but more than fifteen times before the Communion during the short pauses which the canon allows of. And so absorbed was he in the presence of his Divine Master, that he had not the slightest idea of his words being audible; indeed, most probably he was altogether unconscious that he spoke aloud.

It was his invariable custom when writing to have a large crucifix before him, and amidst all his occupations he maintained unbroken union with his Lord, the name of Jesus being frequently heard to escape his lips.

He made it a constant practice to ask on behalf of his charitable undertakings the prayers of persons whom he chanced to meet, and he used very often to join the orphans of Vaugirard at their prayers, in order to have an opportunity of recommending his intentions to them. The spirit of faith in which he sought the aid of their prayers inspired kindred feelings in those to whom he spoke; and it was remarked that the children never prayed with greater fervour than when Abbé Planchat had come to the orphanage to lay his various intentions before them.

Not unfrequently it happened that, worn out by his long walks and protracted vigils, he could not resist the drowsiness that stole over him, but instead of yielding to this feeling, and going to sleep, he would set himself to wax the wooden floor of the sanctuary, using the brushes with such energy as to throw himself into a violent perspiration. All the time he was employed in this fatiguing work, he prayed without ceasing; indeed, there was scarcely a moment in which he did not breathe forth some ejaculatory petition.

He entered with great zest into manual labour ; for instance, while the foundations of the new orphanage at Vaugirard were being dug, he worked at them with all his might, allowing no one to take his share of the toil. Whenever there was anything specially troublesome to be done, any help to be given, any load to be carried, he offered his assistance with the same cheerful alacrity which his pious sister had remarked in him as a child.

There is plenty of evidence to prove that he was no stranger to corporal mortifications. The amount of hard work he performed would have been enough, and more than enough, to fulfil the obligation to do penance binding on every Christian, but his love would not be content with this. Several times he was surprised in the act of putting on or taking off his iron belt. He wore it daily at his meal times, and also in bed. His disciplines too were frequent. Every morning, even when the winters were most severe, it was his habit to wash freely in cold water. One day, the brother who acted as tailor told him reproachfully that, running about as he did, he wore out twice as many clothes as the other members of the community, and proposed to put strips of leather on his trousers. "Do so, by all means, my good brother," the humble priest replied ; "it will be more in conformity with holy poverty, and another advantage, I shall be able to walk faster, as there will be less friction." One cannot but imagine this method of repairing to be otherwise than extremely uncomfortable, but M. Planchat was never heard to complain of it.

In later times at Ste. Anne, his bed consisted of a single pailasse, and his pillow of the cushion of an old chair, once covered with velvet, but now so thoroughly worn out as to be of no use even to his poor people, who would not have accepted it if offered to them.

Once after he had been on his feet the whole day,

he took the omnibus to return to Vaugirard. On being asked for his fare, he found that his purse was quite empty, all it contained having been given to the poor. The conductor wanted to make him get out at once, but he turned with the greatest simplicity of manner to some ladies who were in the omnibus, and humbly asked them to give him the required ten centimes as an alms.

On Sundays it was customary in the house at Grenelle to leave as long an interval as possible between the two meals of the community, in order that they might be more at liberty for their various duties. It was, however, allowable for them, if very tired, to have a mid-day collation, similar to that served out to the apprentices. The Abbé Planchat, engrossed by his children, or absorbed in his confessional work, never had anything between breakfast and supper, and very rarely did he take this evening meal at the fixed hour. If he asked for his mid-day collation, it was only to give it to some poor child, who, as a punishment, had been deprived of his own. He would thus remain from the morning up to ten at night without partaking of any food whatsoever, although he worked harder than any one else, especially on Sundays.

His meals were, moreover, almost always interrupted by some visitor. "M. Planchat, you are wanted for M—who is ill." "Very ill?" "Yes, Father." "Then, make haste, and fetch me the box with the holy oils." "But you have not finished your soup." "Put it on the fire to keep warm; I shall be back directly." He did come back, it is true, but often not until eight o'clock in the evening, having tasted nothing since the morning, except perhaps half a cup of coffee, or a few spoonfuls of soup.

Yet M. Planchat was naturally by no means a small eater, and his constitution required a great deal of nourishment. Nevertheless, he would set out early in the morning,

and go through the day with only a roll and a cake of chocolate, and more often still nothing at all, as we have just said. When he got home he had to wait till supper-time. It was his office to serve out the food, and he used to fancy his brethren as hungry as he was himself, consequently helping them to twice as much as they wanted. On this being pointed out to him, he answered cheerfully : "Oh, I beg your pardon ; you are quite right ; I credited every one with as large an appetite as my own."

In spite of the numerous calls which required his presence in the poor and populous faubourgs of Charonne and the neighbourhood, M. Planchat continued until the outbreak of the war to reside at the Orphanage of Vaugirard, the mother-house of the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, situated at the other end of Paris. It will readily be understood that to be thus removed by no inconsiderable distance from the centre of his labours caused much additional fatigue to this zealous missionary, and proved a constant restraint to him. Nevertheless, for eight years he acquiesced in this arrangement, irksome as it was to nature, and trying to his apostolic zeal. And in spite of it he never failed in the regularity required of a religious, and always practised obedience most faithfully, edifying the community by his scrupulous exactness in excusing himself if he was late, and by his careful forethought in providing himself beforehand with the permission of his superiors on the most minute points. Every Saturday he gave up to them the little store of money he kept for his alms, mistrusting his ability to restrain his desire of giving, and therefore preferring not to expose himself to the temptation of breaking the rule during those formidable Sundays, passed entirely among his poor and children.

But his obedience achieved its most meritorious victories in his complete submission to the restraints his superiors

thought right incessantly to impose on his zeal, and the incredible complications to which his manner of life gave rise. This it was which cost his prompt and energetic nature the hardest struggle. However, he succeeded in conquering himself, and invariably submitted the plans he was never tired of forming, to his superiors for their approval, thus obtaining for them the blessing, and ensuring for them the success promised by the Holy Spirit : "The obedient man shall speak of victory."

His hasty and eager temperament sometimes led him to speak irritably, but he was the first to regret the words that had escaped him, and could not rest without apologizing, asking pardon even of the youngest of his brethren, of a poor person, or of a child. He has been seen to kneel in public in the parlour of the *Patronage* at the feet of the parish priest of Charonne, to whom he had involuntarily occasioned some annoyance through an excess of zeal. The humility of the saint quite abashed the good priest, who readily forgave him, and loved him all the better for what had occurred. Actions such as these recur frequently in the life of the Abbé Planchat.

"He excelled in humility more than in any other virtue," writes his sister ; "and had I not read the sketch of his life, I should never have thought that he had done so much good. His letters, rare and brief as they used to be (a dozen lines or so), invariably contained a sentence expressive of the poor opinion he had of himself and of his own actions. 'Say a great many prayers for me. I do nothing of any use ; I am a mere drone, and cannot get anything done.'

"Another time : 'I wish I had your zeal : I am but an idle fellow.' Or else : 'Get all the prayers you can for your poor brother, in order that his clumsiness may not be the cause of losing the many opportunities he has of

winning souls.' Or again : 'Commend your unworthy brother to the prayers of your companions, that he may not mar the work of God, but may carry out His designs,' &c. These words were no empty formulas in his case, but the true expressions of his feelings, and of a deep and lasting conviction, not the transient impressions of the moment.

"In one of my confidential talks with him, while he was still at the Seminary, I said to him : 'How delighted I should be to have a brother a Jesuit ; but you would not like to be one, should you ?'

"'How can you talk in that way ?' he quickly rejoined ; 'not like to be a Jesuit ! Why, I am not worthy to enter such an Order ! You know it is one of the most illustrious in the Church.' 'Well, then, a Lazarist ?' I replied. 'Nor that either ; all those are out of my reach.' 'But how is it,' I said, 'that you, who used to be so fond of reading *Les Annales*, and all about missionary work, you, whom I have even seen shedding tears because the supply was not sufficient to respond to the appeals of the poor heathen, do not now feel any inclination or desire, much less an imperative call to go to their help !'

"He would then answer with a deep sigh : 'Ah, had you explored the suburbs of Paris, as I have done, and seen in what profound ignorance and moral destitution their wretched inhabitants are sunk, you would agree with me as to this being quite as good a field for missionary effort as China, and one where it would be none the less meritorious in the sight of God, because more obscure and unknown to the world. . . . I sometimes meet with children twelve or fourteen years of age, and much older too, who do not even know there is a God ; and they are Christians, at least by baptism. . . . And what can one say about the indifference to religion in which a vast majority of

these people live? They live like heathens, not to say like brute beasts !’

“Then, I would add, your feelings are quite changed since the time when, reading the Acts of the Martyrs, and seeing all they endured with such heroic fortitude, you exclaimed : ‘Oh, happy they ! God in His goodness did indeed amply reward them for all their sufferings, for all their toils, by granting them the privilege and glory of martyrdom ! who but must envy their lot !’ Now, if you were a missionary, you might hope for a like happy end. ‘I am not worthy of it, you forget that. God makes choice of whom He wills ; it is not for us to choose, but to remain passive in His hands, only striving never to diverge from the path traced out for us by His providence. The martyrdom God requires of me is perfect abnegation of self ; to give up my own will and only seek His good pleasure, be the cost what it may ; to yield a blind and habitual obedience to all the wishes of my superiors, never uttering a word, even though it should apparently be in my power to do great things, but giving up all rather than act from my own will. This is what I think, my dear sister, and what you must think too. Let ours be the martyrdom of the will and of the desires.’

“God was pleased to reward the sacrifice His servant made of his own desire to be a martyr, by permitting him to become one in *deed*, even whilst remaining in Paris. His were no idle words, his whole life was the faithful carrying out of them ; entirely devoted to his poor people, he so completely identified himself with them, that the last time I was in Paris, five years ago, several persons said to me : ‘If you have any influence over him, do tell him that it is not right to *kill* himself as he is doing, he is not an angel, and ought to remember that he has a body.’ I answered : ‘How can I induce him to do anything of the

kind? I scarcely ever get a few minute's conversation with him, though I have come all the way from Constantinople; and even when he does talk to me, he can speak of nothing but his poor people.' My dear brother went further than this, he did not forget himself alone, but dropped all connection with persons to whom he was really attached, if he saw no practical use in keeping it up.

"Being less mortified than he was, I often murmured at a delicacy of conscience which I thought exaggerated, and which deprived me of the consolation of seeing him and talking to him; nevertheless, I really thought all the more highly of him on account of it, and attached greater value to the brief interviews he granted to my importunity. In this manner he acted all his life long. Even in prison, where one would have imagined he must have more leisure to think of and write to his family, he kept all his paper for letters addressed to his poor, or to such of his relatives whom he thought likely to help them. If he mentioned his mother or brother once or twice, it was to beg them to pay what he owed for things supplied to the poor. For his sisters he had not a single word—not that he could have forgotten them, his heart was too kind for that—but because, knowing them to be engaged in the service of God, he did not see that his writing to them could do them any real good, or be in any way profitable to the poor. And yet what a comfort it would have been to me to receive and treasure up a few lines written by him in prison! I did not deserve this, I ought to have made better use of his example. I must therefore content myself with carefully preserving the only such relic I possess, dated February 28, 1871, written on the back of a printed leaflet, headed with the words: 'Collection in aid of young artisans, and of the *Patronage des Mobiles, &c.*' This I will transcribe word for word, as it sums up all I have just said: after God he had no thought but for his poor.

“ J.M.J.

“ *Charonne, February 27, 1871.*

“ Many thanks for your New Year's gift of prayers.

“ I suppose you could not add to it another consisting of money ?

“ From the printing on the back of this you will see how great is our work and how great are our expenses. There is absolutely nothing more to be got here.

“ Our debts amount to 2,000 francs, of which 500 are for our board whilst in prison.*

“ Accept my best love and assurance of prayers for you and for your work.

“ ABBÉ PLANCHAT.”

“ On the occasion of my visit to Paris in 1867, I reproached him for giving me no details of his work. He replied : ‘ Would you have me take the time when I ought to be catechizing, or hearing confessions, or would you have me send away some poor woman without an answer, just to give you the pleasure of reading letters written at such a cost ? Let us gather in the harvest while life lasts, nor lose a single instant of our precious time, only given us that we may win heaven, and every moment of which may add something to our merits.’ And once, when he had allowed a whole year to elapse without writing to me, I said to him : ‘ If you cannot find time without taking it from your sleep, I still think you might make this little sacrifice for your sister every two months or so ; you are always asking me for prayers, do you in return for them send a few lines somewhat more frequently. You call yourself a drone, I really think what you say is true.’

“ ‘ I deserve all your reproaches,’ he replied, by the hand of a child who was acting as his secretary, ‘ I really am idle,

* These debts were paid later on.

and do not understand the art of arranging my work so as to find time for everything ; you tell me to take some time from my sleep, but, dearest sister, I am obliged to put so many things off until night, there are so many letters which must be written, besides my attendance in the confessional, often prolonged far beyond midnight in order to afford my poor children ('prentice boys from a distance) a chance of approaching the sacraments, that I am too often forced to overstep the permissions granted me ; but, believe me, dear sister, these are the only reasons why my letters are so short, I remember you daily before God, I pray for your work as well as my own. Let us mortify one another ; the good Master Whom we serve will richly recompense us, and our meeting in heaven will be all the sweeter ; meanwhile, since we both belong to God, let us devote to Him and to our poor all the time which of right belongs to them.'

"What could I reply to such arguments? The best thing for me was silently to strive to imitate him, and I resolved to follow his example. Now that he is in heaven, I allow myself greater freedom, and turn to him in all my difficulties ; my confidence has not been deceived, and experience has taught me the truth of the words : Charity shall last and become perfect in heaven, where alone its true perfection can be attained. Yes, I do feel and I have felt on many occasions that my dear brother is able to do more for me in heaven than he could when on earth. Ever since he has been in the immediate presence of the God of love, he has been of immense help to me, especially in matters relating to the good works to which his life was given up."

The love of souls rendered sacrifices of the most heroic nature easy to M. Planchat. The consciousness of souls being lost was for him a life-long martyrdom. The excessive fatigue rendered inevitable by the circumstances in which

he was placed, and by the requirements of obedience, were as nothing to him compared with the grief he felt at not being able to do all the good he would fain have done. This is touchingly expressed in some notes written during his last retreats.

“ I belong entirely to God. It is for Him, therefore, to dispose of me as He pleases ; and for me, under the trying arrangement which compels a division of my life between Charonne and Vaugirard, to entertain the deepest compassion, and offer unceasing prayer for the vast needs around me, which I might easily be enabled better to relieve, and to bring this fact from time to time before the notice of my superiors : this is all I can do consistently with obedience. However, fidelity to my resolutions, and the renewal of my interior life in a spirit of sacrifice, will perhaps amply compensate for what I am prevented doing for the salvation of these poor souls who are without a helper, and are ready to grasp the hand I long to hold out to them. I resolve especially to offer to God the anguish which fills my heart, and the tears which often rise to my eyes whenever I feel that I am fettered and held back by obedience, nothing else restraining me from engaging in that vast field of labour, on to which I am permitted to look, but forbidden to enter.”

These words reveal the secret sorrows of the Apostle's heart. He could not bear the idea of any good left undone, or any evil left unremedied for want of men, money, or time ; and he used to devise a thousand ingenious ways of himself supplying those several needs. He spent his days in visiting the poor, his nights in writing ; making secretaries of his Brethren, his children, every one who came in his way. He then dictated innumerable circulars, some asking for pecuniary assistance, others addressed to penitents of his, or to workmen and boys who had apparently left off coming to confession or to the *Patronage*. Upon one

occasion he owed to one of his Brethren that he had not been in bed for eleven nights. This was at Christmas time, and the number of those preparing for their First Communion happened to be unusually large, just at the time he had sent out letters to persons habitually employed on Sunday, and who were never able to go to Communion. His physical strength often gave way before his untiring and almost superhuman zeal; and M. Planchat, setting off at eight o'clock at night on what he used to call his rounds among the sick, would sometimes drop asleep in the houses of the poor people, who, understanding that his exhaustion arose from excessive work, were careful not to disturb the compulsory repose sent by God to His servant.

This liberal expenditure of effort and activity on external work did not occasion any neglect of prayer or of the means of grace on M. Planchat's part. Faithful to the maxim laid down by St. Ignatius, he worked as if success depended on his unaided exertions, and he prayed and incited others to pray as earnestly as if success depended on God alone. Convinced that unless he maintained a close union with our Lord his labours would be fruitless, he ever aimed at checking his imagination and ruling all his powers, for fear of losing the presence of Him Who plainly warns us in His Gospel that without Him we can do nothing.

When on his round of visits he used, like St. Vincent of Paul, to honour our Lord in the person of the children or poor people with whom he was brought in contact: "Let us consider," he wrote in his notes of a retreat (1868), "the labours of the Divine Child Jesus as he grew up. From His earliest years He did not know what it was to spare himself. He was only twelve years old when Joseph's strength began to fail, and this inimitable model of all good sons cheerfully undertook the additional work thus imposed on him. On the death of Joseph, Jesus redoubled His

exertions in order to gain a subsistence for Mary. Have I not too often failed to see in each poor little factory child, each apprentice, each young artisan, each working man at the head of his household, a living representative of Jesus Christ in the various phases of His life at Nazareth? 'I am poor, and in labours from my youth.'"

And in another retreat, made under the direction of Père Olivaint, the future companion of his captivity and martyrdom, he wrote the following resolution, exhibiting the manner in which he sanctified all his undertakings, and how the distractions and inevitable preoccupations of the active life were no hindrance to the development of his interior life.

"Whilst walking through the streets on my way to look up my poor friends, my apprentices, or the children of my catechetical class, I will rouse myself to make greater efforts to snatch them from hell, by meditating from time to time on this subject."

The reader will pardon these lengthy details, for it is only by contemplating the interior life of the saints that we can understand the prodigies they were enabled to effect. Had M. Planchat's activity been merely natural, his strength could never have held out during twenty years of such work. Ever and again his soul drew near to steep itself afresh in the eternal source of charity, which is none other than God Himself, the fount of light and love, whose radiance alone enables us to comprehend such a life and death as his.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORK AT ST. ANNE.

IN the beginning of the year 1870, the institution called the *Patronage Ste. Anne* was in a most flourishing condition. The number of young apprentices and working men who were habitual members amounted to nearly four hundred, and about five hundred and forty others, who were unable to attend regularly, still kept up their connection with it. On April 14, eighty-seven boys and young men, of ages ranging from twelve to twenty-two, made their First Communion, and the number of relatives who were present on this solemn occasion was greater than usual. On Easter Day, three hundred and forty boys assembled for the early Mass; on the evening before, four other priests had been required to assist the chaplain of the house in his ministrations.

From another point of view also the Institution of St. Anne stood out prominently amongst the charitable societies of Paris, for the sum total of the deposits made by its members in the Savings Bank surpassed that of any other establishment of the kind, although the great majority of the depositors were extremely poor; a proof that they were trained to habits of order and forethought.

But the good done by the institution was not preceptible within the four walls of the house only, nor only among the boys and young men who frequented it. The active measures and ardent zeal of M. Planchat extended his

sphere of action so as to comprise the families around him. We have given some incidents of his apostolic labours during his residence at Grenelle ; and the, so to speak, permanent mission which he carried out at St. Anne, under the conditions related above, that is to say by means of a house-to-house visitation of every family, also furnishes edifying anecdotes, a few of which we give here. The Apostle himself relates them in letters which he sent to charitable societies and benevolent individuals, with the object of soliciting the pecuniary assistance requisite for the support of his good works. We give them as they stand, without fear of wearying the reader ; we would only beg him to remember, whilst reading them, that they were dictated at night, at the close of most fatiguing days, and were often sent off without having been read through.

“ In the case of the P——s, the father put obstacles in the way of the children making their First Communion ; but now, out of five who had not made it only, two remain. Stephen and his sister Louise, aged respectively fourteen and twenty-five, made their First Communion together on January 11 ; Emil, twelve years and a half, is preparing to make his at Easter. After a long course of negotiations, the father was with difficulty prevailed upon to allow Stephen to make his First Communion on Thursday ; as for the retreat, that was not to be thought of. Nevertheless, Stephen did not miss one of the preparatory exercises. A young friend of Louise’s accompanied her to the Holy Table, a Jewess, baptized at the *Patronage* on the 8th instant ; she told me her brother was coming at Easter. The father of these latter is a Catholic ; their mother, an Israelite, seems to me in a fair way to be converted ; the family is in easy circumstances.”

“ There was a Protestant, for many years resident in the parish of St. Eloi, whom the members of the Conference

of St. Vincent of Paul were in the habit of visiting ; in the conversations I had with his wife on the occasion of her son William's First Communion, she said to me several times : ' You will get my husband round at last ; he is a good man, he has had all his five children baptized Catholics, and he is very grateful for the kindness shown to his poor deaf boy at the *Patronage*.' The father came to see me : a thoughtful intelligent man. I lent him some books, and on December 9 he attended the instruction for First Communion at St. Anne, which made an evident impression on him. The next day, which was Friday, whilst making my meditation, I felt an inspiration to go and see him ; I found him in bed, and asked him if he would not at last decide upon embracing the religion of all the rest of his family. I bade two of his children pray that God might enlighten his mind ; he promised to send me a decisive answer before twelve the next day. All the way home William, whom I had taken with me, said his beads for his father ; and at the Mass of Thanksgiving went to Communion for the same intention. Before noon an affirmative answer was brought me, and I arranged matters with the Archbishop. The same evening, Mr. M—— was present at the retreat preached in preparation for the Confirmation ; I had one interview with him afterwards, and another on the Sunday morning ; he made his abjuration before the Mass for the newly confirmed, and went to Communion, together with his son, at that same Mass. All the remainder of the day, as he told me with a smile, he was kept prisoner at the *Patronage* ; the community invited him to breakfast with them, and at supper time he was the guest of the young workmen at their restaurant, where coffee and sweetmeats were provided for all : and truly poor Mr. M—— stood in need of some refreshment, as he had been up and about for the last thirty-six hours. The

poor wife's joy was unbounded, and joy as great and lasting filled the heart of the neophyte himself. He assisted at the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, and was present at all the Christmas services, in the company of his favourite son William."

"Towards the end of October, I received a letter couched in nearly the following terms, and dated from a cell in the Mazas prison: 'You greatly urged my wife to go to her duties when her boy made his First Communion; she has, it is true, been very remiss, and Andrew's First Communion would be an excellent opportunity for her, since I have already been to my duties; but you do not know the obstinacy of the Limousines, they are not so easily persuaded. Pray leave my wife alone a little while.' The good man did not know the power of charity in seasons of affliction; an excellent Jesuit Father came for two days to assist me in receiving the parents of those young persons who were about to make their First Communion. Only a few words from the devoted missionary were needed to make the poor woman promise to come to Vaugirard, in order to communicate at the Mass I was to say for Andrew. On October 30 she arrived at a quarter past seven in the morning, having walked all the way from the Faubourg St. Antoine to the Orphanage at Vaugirard. The Mass had already begun, for she had lost her way, so she went to confession and Communion after it was finished. She came again when her son made his First Communion, and accompanied him to the holy table. The next day I received a letter dated from the prison of La Roquette, and filled with the warmest expressions of gratitude. Andrew's father had been sentenced to the minimum of the penalty he had incurred; but then the poor mother had added a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Victories to the one she had already made to Vaugirard."

“To these results of the First Communion, I ought to add those of the preparation we made for the festival of Christmas, in reference to the Jubilee. From the first the attendance was very numerous ; we had sent out more than three hundred invitations, together with a very useful little work on the Jubilee. Six confessors had responded to my appeal for Christmas Eve, and two priests were simultaneously engaged for thirty-five minutes in giving Holy Communion.”

“Amongst the young men who had made their First Communion in the course of the year, and whom I assembled, as was my custom, for the Christmas festival, there was one who attracted especial notice on account of the complete change that had been wrought in him. His conversion had, moreover, been followed by that of his father and his mother. On the death of the latter, which occurred shortly after, Felix had been handed over to the charge of an elder brother, from whose interference he had hitherto been shielded by his mother's influence, and his connection with the *Patronage*. The first thing this foolish brother did, was to find a fresh situation for Felix at a distance (although we had provided him with an excellent berth), and effectually to prevent his ever coming to us. The active measures and the united entreaties of both the Director and the Chaplain of St. Anne were impotent to avert this misfortune, but an indelible impression had been made on Felix's mind by his First Communion. On receiving the invitation from us, reminding him of that touching anniversary, Felix came just as he was on leaving his work ; for if he had been seen to go and change his clothes it might have aroused suspicion, and he would probably not have been able to come at all.”

“‘See I have brought my mother to you,’ said B—,

when he made his appearance at ten at night on December 24, summoned, like many others, by my circular letter, after a six months' absence. 'Well, my good woman, I suppose you have come for your confession, have you not?' 'No, indeed, I know my religion far too well for that, one must be prepared, and I am not.' 'Look here, do you go and speak to the Jesuit Father in the confessional by the door, he will put you in the way of making a good confession later on.' 'Yes, do go, mother,' added the boy. The mother yielded; she knelt for a quarter of an hour at the feet of God's minister, and afterwards received Communion at the midnight Mass. Two girls who had accompanied her followed her example, both going to confession and then to Communion at the next Mass. As for her, four Masses were not too much for her, and she could not make up her mind to go away until all the lights upon the altar were extinguished. As B—— gave his arm to his mother on setting out to go home, he whispered to me: 'I had a fine business to get Mother to come, but then you know, she had not been for twenty years.'"

"'When will your turn come?' I said to Mrs. C—— in the course of the same evening. 'I am sorry, sir, to say that there is no chance for me.' 'Do you mean to say that you intend to be less of a Christian than your two boys, whom you have brought up so well?' 'I assure you, sir, that for the last twenty years or more, their good father and I have endured a perfect martyrdom, for we were only married before the registrar. Could we possibly be married in a church without the people at the works, and especially our grown-up boys, knowing anything about it?' 'I will undertake to arrange it all with the Archbishop.' 'Well, then, do speak to my husband about it, he is in the parlour of the *Patronage* with his children.' The excellent man declared he should only be too glad, if the affair could

come off at a distance and without publicity ; a few days later the marriage was solemnized at my Mass, in a distant chapel, the husband and wife both receiving Communion, although it was nearly noon."

"Eighty-seven boys and young men, aged from twelve to twenty-two, made their First Communion on April 14, and their relatives were present at the Mass in greater numbers than had ever before been known ; a large proportion of the mothers, brothers, and sisters' of our children receiving Communion. The evening before, a worthy man, a native of Picardy, came to ask all particulars as to the way in which his nephew, a poor little rope-maker, was to be dressed on the occasion. 'My good man,' I said to him, 'this is the second time in four months that you have given the child a fresh suit, for it was only on New Year's Day that you rigged him out anew from head to foot. A man who shows such kindness to a poor child who is slow and backward, must be acting from motives which God will not fail to reward : go and speak to the good Father hearing confessions there, and then you can go to Communion to-morrow with your little *protégé*.' 'But, Father, to tell the truth, it is a long time—but no matter, I will go.' Half an hour later I saw the man standing in the chapel, and asked : 'What are you doing, my good friend ?' 'I am doing the Stations.' Then taking both my hands he added with tears in his eyes : 'I am so much obliged to you.'"

"About ten boys of various ages, employed at a small glass foundry in the neighbourhood, had been admitted to the *Patronage* in order to be prepared for First Communion. These first communicants brought with them some comrades much older than themselves ; and during the retreat they were so much in earnest that they did not leave themselves more than three or four hours for sleep. Father L—— of

the Oratory, who heard their confessions, exerted himself to mitigate the sufferings which the heat of the furnaces caused them, by providing them with spectacles, and getting wooden masks made for them."

"Never had the Easter retreat at the *Patronage* been so well attended. One could judge of this by the fact that eighteen or nineteen hundred little books, given as vouchers of attendance, were distributed during the six days, when the list of those present was called over. On Easter Day, three hundred and forty members of the *Patronage* assembled at the early Mass, Communion being given to more than five hundred persons on that and the following mornings. The unworthy Chaplain of St. Anne was aided in his work by four very zealous priests from the Faubourg St. Germain."

"It was the custom at St. Anne to give what was termed *un pain d'école** to four or five children every week. This trifling allowance enabled the poor children to remain at school, when they would otherwise have been sent to work at the factory on account of the extreme indigence of their parents. In looking over the register, the words *protégé par Ste. Anne* will be observed to stand above the names of several children instead of their parents' address. And truly this house is the home of the poor destitute child; for if he cannot be kept there at night, he finds within its walls the food, care, and kindness which is absent from his own."

An extract from the letter of a Jesuit Father, whom, by dint of prayers and entreaties, the Abbé Planchat had obtained permission from his Superiors to associate with himself in his apostolic work, will complete the foregoing sketch of his labours, and of the House of St. Anne, before

* This was an allowance of bread given weekly to some of the poorest children.

the siege began. The following pages are from the pen of Father d'Aage while the impression made by the death of the martyr was still fresh in his mind ; it is possible that he never even read them over, but one thing is certain, namely, that they breathe forth the truest of all eloquence, the eloquence of the heart :

“ It was in 1866 that Providence brought me into connection with the good Father, through my having to preach the Easter retreat at St. Anne. My Superior appointed me to do this, and it subsequently fell to my lot to have frequent intercourse with him. From the moment of my first introduction, his charming simplicity, his unobtrusive cordiality, his indefatigable zeal, won my heart for himself and for his good works. I intentionally say ‘ works,’ because when I first arrived at St. Anne, I imagined I should only have to do with the young men and boys belonging to the *Patronage*; but the sphere of action of its fervent director was a much wider one. His life was spent in efforts made on a large scale to help the indigent poor of the neighbourhood, in visits paid to the destitute sick; above, all in researches carried on with a view to discover children who had not made their First Communion, or perhaps had not even been baptized. All the week was given up to these labours of love; and on Saturday evenings the good Father took up his quarters at St. Anne, to remain there the whole of Sunday. How happy it made him on that day, if the boys belonging to the *Patronage*, more especially the older ones, went to Communion in answer to his frequent appeals. Sunday was the most tiring day of all; from half-past five, sometimes from four o'clock in the morning until nine or ten (occasionally twelve) at night, he hardly sat down, and we really had to employ force to compel him to join us at supper, a thing we could not possibly have done, had not the house been pretty well cleared by that time. During

the whole day, he devoted himself entirely to hearing the confessions of children and poor people, to giving counsel and encouragement to his dear workmen, to holding kindly intercourse with the parents of his children, to catechizing, to giving advice, and distributing the alms collected during the week. In a word, he belonged to everybody but himself. Three times a year he collected a number of boys from the parts around Charonne for their First Communion, making use of some of the young men of the *Patronage* to help him teach them the Catechism, and various were the means his charity devised in order to animate the zeal of the more backward and less intelligent of the children. The most successful perhaps of these was a sale of useful articles, which the children were allowed to purchase with the good marks they had obtained. This sale was got up at the cost of many journeyings; but these journeyings, long and wearisome as they were, were less bitter to him than the repulses and even rudeness he not unfrequently met with in the course of them. He had established a confraternity at the *Patronage* for the more fervent amongst its members. It was a most edifying sight to behold him surrounded by his spiritual children, gently guiding their steps in the path of true piety, and accusing himself of little omissions of the obligations in the simple way in which he did everything, even his greatest actions.

“To return to the Easter retreat. When the children had been got together, he sought to add to this principal group some accessories in the shape of their relatives and friends, never resting satisfied unless the joy of the solemn festival was heightened by the presence of some adults who had come to repair their former negligence. The best places were kept for these latter, and their example had a great influence upon the young people. It was this extension of the good work which necessitated the con-

struction of the large chapel, and I feel sure it is not found too spacious. Thus the Abbé Planchat brought his zeal to bear on the whole neighbourhood, and I have often heard him spoken of in the highest terms in the self-same streets through which he afterwards passed on his way to martyrdom. One of his characteristic features was his admirable disinterestedness in regard to souls, for although he was the director of the house, and had watched these impressionable and affectionate young men grow up under his apostolic care, he would with great gentleness and perfect tact introduce his spiritual children to the fellow-workers he had brought to the *Patronage*. 'Go to that kind Father,' he would say, 'he will do you so much good.' He spared no effort in order that they might feel themselves at perfect liberty to do as they liked, so that our ministrations at St. Anne were attended with no difficulty; we could set to work at once, with a delightful freedom from all constraint. This feature of his character is worthy of special notice. The good Father always found work for the priests he induced to come to St. Anne, and it must be added that, understanding so perfectly as he did what ministering to souls really is, the more fellow-workers he had the better pleased he was, knowing that the harvest would be so much the ampler. The same unselfishness and humility led him even to give up his own room to those who came at his request to help him, and put up with the most uncomfortable quarters himself. How warmly he thanked me for the little I had done, how eagerly he pressed us to come again. I would gladly have multiplied myself fourfold, in order to be of more use to him, and I thought nothing of the distance when my occupations allowed of a visit to St. Anne. I must not omit to say that he was often so kind as to beg the money to pay for a carriage for his visitors, and was vexed if a feeling of delicacy ever led them to decline it. In that

case he set his ingenuity to work in order to make a refusal impossible.

“ These numerous charitable works necessarily brought the good Father into contact with the parish priests, on whose rights he was scrupulously careful never to infringe. The excellent pastor of Charonne, to whom I was introduced, used good-humouredly to joke him about his encroaching zeal ; but he had the highest veneration for him, and was, like his fellow-priests, only too glad to make use of the able assistance Providence had sent him in the person of M. Planchat. The latter once repeated to me with holy delight the answer made to him by M. Langénieux, the then priest of St. Ambrose: ‘ By means, my good Father, do all the good you can in my parish, for we shall never be numerous enough to cultivate so vast a field.’

“ Of course he had to encounter misunderstandings, complaints, and reproaches, but of these he was never heard to complain ; it was only from others that one knew of the opposition he had met with. As for him, he awaited another opportunity, and when this presented itself he attempted anew, with humble deference, to accomplish the good work which his enterprising zeal convinced him was necessary.

“ I have already related some traits of the humility he displayed when cooperating with others ; this virtue was the main-spring of all his other virtues and the basis of all his good works. Before carrying out his plans for the good of others, he humbly asked permission from the person empowered to grant it. Eager as he was to hear the remarks and criticisms of others, he had no false modesty about giving his own opinion when it was asked for. On one occasion, the particulars of which would be out of place, I myself had the opportunity of observing how easy

his habitual humility and self-denial made it for him to bear opposition, even though that opposition was obviously irrational. But he gaily laughed it off, and I really doubt whether his opponent ever suspected the annoyance he had caused the good Father. I say gaily, for that word is eminently applicable to M. Planchat. The beauty of his soul shone forth in his smile, his expression, his easy manner, which were always the same, even when he was suffering from his terrible headaches, so long as these did not compel him to give up work.

“In speaking of this admirable man, the expressions, ‘good works,’ ‘labours,’ ‘toil,’ recur every moment; the absorbing nature of his activity renders this repetition inevitable. One distinctive feature of his apostolate deserves mention here; activity in ministerial work may result from natural temperament alone, but when we find it combined with humility and true piety, we recognize at once its supernatural character. Now M. Planchat never allowed the warmth of his zeal to dry up the source of real and heartfelt devotion within his own soul. Although his exterior life was one of distraction and unrest, and the claims on his attention multifarious both at St. Anne and elsewhere, he had but to kneel for a moment before the Blessed Sacrament, in order to regain that interior union with our Lord and the Blessed Virgin which in fact he never lost. There was in his character an absence of reserve amounting almost to *naïveté*, but at which no one could take exception, as it was, like everything about him, perfectly natural. Never did I admire this native simplicity more than on one of the First Communion days, in the preparation which I had been summoned to take part; I seem now to see the sacristy filled with the boys and their relatives, all radiant and joyous, as the lower orders of Paris invariably are, if only they can be removed from

the pernicious influences which give an evil direction to those qualities so easily made available for good. M. Planchat was indeed among them all like a kind father in the midst of his family, for he had clothed nearly all the children, besides assisting their parents; and the presence of Madame Planchat, who shared in the labours of her admirable son, as she did in the sorrows of his captivity, imparted to the scene the character of a family gathering. There was a certain grandeur as well as Christian simplicity about the whole affair; it realized the words of the Apostle: 'We are one body.'"

CHAPTER VI.

DURING THE SIEGE.

ON the outbreak of the war with Germany, the *Patronage Ste. Anne*, like all other similar institutions, was shaken to its very foundations. The oldest of its members, whose good example made them patterns to the other young men, were called to military service. In the case of the younger ones, work at first grew slack, and finally ceased altogether; thus idleness, with all its attendant evils, threatened to swoop down upon the youths who had hitherto been guarded from them with so much care and pains. As a further result of the siege, the unfortunate inhabitants of the Faubourgs had to endure terrible privations in addition to their ordinary sufferings. Pernicious habits, acquired whilst on guard on the ramparts, finished their demoralization; the thirty sous which formed the daily pay of the National Guardsman were seldom brought home intact, although they were, at that time, all his family had to rely on for its support. The courage and charity of M. Planchat did not fail him in

presence of this accumulation of evils. Nothing daunted him ; he trusted that God had mercy in store for the people, and that these grievous trials would result in bringing them nearer to Him. He had at length obtained permission from his Superiors to take up his permanent abode at Charonne, so as to be able in future to give his whole time and his whole self to the relief of the various forms of distress around him. He succeeded in collecting, during the space of a few months, alms to the amount of twenty thousand francs in Paris alone, at the very time the city was deserted, half ruined, more than half starved, and in a state of siege. While a sufficiency of food was nowhere procurable for money alone, he kept open house at St. Anne for the benefit of all comers ; the greater part of the boys belonging to the *Patronage* had their meals there, relief being also distributed to their parents. Nor did M. Planchat restrict his almsgiving to the sphere of the *Patronage*, extensive as that sphere already was ; he did not content himself with relieving the wretchedness that came to ask aid, but went to seek it out, over and over again. He explored the tortuous streets and out-of-the-way alleys, to acquaint himself with the well-nigh incredible amount of moral and physical suffering which lurked in the nooks and corners of most miserable hovels. He did not trouble himself about the growing hatred to the clergy, increasing day by day and everywhere showing signs of its existence, in the popular journals and at public meetings. As he had undertaken to multiply the assistance given to the poor at a time when the resources both of societies and individuals were at the lowest ebb, so did he also give a fresh impetus to his apostolic zeal. The Chapel of St. Anne was transformed into a permanent mission-house, and he went about the streets seeking out children, working men, Gardes Mobiles, inviting them to come to Mass, to Communion, to the daily instructions. Not one of the means

made use of by the saints (open-air preaching alone excepted) did M. Planchat leave unemployed in order to win souls. Without contemplating the obstacles he might encounter, or attempting to remove them, braving danger and setting human respect at defiance, thinking only of what could be done for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he attracted to St. Anne both friends and enemies. And in order to get through the almost superhuman labours he had undertaken, he called to his side fourteen priests, whom he initiated into the secrets of a ministry of no ordinary kind, and in regard to whom he always kept himself in the background, in complete self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice.

In reward of such pure zeal and generous devotion, God bestowed on him favours little short of miraculous. Whilst all other charitable institutions of a description similar to his own drooped and languished, even under circumstances far more favourable to their maintenance, the number of those who frequented the House of St. Anne, both during the siege and at the time of the Commune, did not fall short of what it had been in the period of greatest prosperity.

The house was open to all on week-days and Sundays alike, from the very beginning of the war; from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty boys and young men receiving their meals there daily, and being thus kept out of the streets and preserved from an idle life and vagrant habits. Every morning at least six of these *protégés* of the *Patronage* went to Communion, not to speak of their relatives and friends, many of whom had long neglected their duties. Even on week-days a goodly number of Mobiles and members of the National Guard contrived to get off service for the purpose of hearing Mass in the Chapel of St. Anne.

The class of first communicants, instead of diminishing,

increased its numbers. On Christmas Day, 1870, a hundred and twenty-five made their First Communion; amongst these were four persons between the ages of forty and fifty, and fifteen between fourteen and twenty. One hundred and seventy persons, including those for whom it was not the first time of coming, were present daily at the preparatory retreat.

But all we have hitherto related cannot be compared to what M. Planchat did on behalf of the Mobiles from the provinces. The reports sent by him to the various Catholic relief committees, in support of his appeals for pecuniary aid, have been preserved; they will be found to contain most interesting details concerning this improvised undertaking. Whole regiments of Mobiles, the majority of them belonging to the best parts of Brittany, were encamped on the Boulevards in wooden barracks, which merely served to shelter them at night. All day long, in the intervals of their military exercises, they wandered idly about, or took up their quarters in beershops, thus exposing themselves to the most serious dangers. The zeal of the Abbé Planchat was speedily aflame with the desire to provide a refuge for these young men within the walls of St. Anne, to attract them to his chapel, and induce them to make use of his ministerial services during the brief intervals of rest which were granted them before going into action. Having obtained the permission of his Superiors, he lost no time in seeking an interview with the commanders of the various corps, who readily gave their sanction to his plan. The house, the garden, the gymnasium, the chapel, were all placed at the disposal of the numerous regiments which successively occupied the barracks of Charonne and the Bastille during the siege. The first of the gatherings was held on September 28, and by October 18 four thousand Mobiles had found a refuge at St. Anne from dangers of every kind, and had enjoyed those

religious consolations which its kindly director had provided for these truly Christian soldiers. More than three thousand confessions and two thousand six hundred Communions were made at St. Anne during the siege, not to mention the military Masses which the Abbé Planchat arranged at the parish church of Charonne, with the help of its zealous parochial clergy. The astonishment of the inhabitants of these districts may be imagined, when they beheld six or eight hundred Breton Mobiles march past every Sunday to church, headed by their commanding officers.

On October 19 there were three hundred and fifty Mobiles present at the meeting in the chapel, and afterwards one hundred confessions were heard by the priests who assisted M. Planchat. On the 20th five went to Communion and fifty-five to confession; the meeting was attended by seven hundred men belonging to the Mobiles de l'Aube. On the 25th eight hundred Mobiles, with the whole staff of officers, were present at a Mass for the Count de Dampierre.

Towards the end of October the Mobiles were ordered out of Paris, the military arrangements for the defence calling for a removal of troops. Thus for a time our meetings were suspended, but we began them again towards the end of November for the battalions of Sône-et-Loire, and it was not until after the great sortie at Champigny on the 30th that they were finally discontinued.

Although these young soldiers, who had so recently been taken from their quiet country life and family fireside, were very religious and well-disposed, this fact is not enough to account for the remarkable religious movement which took place amongst them. No one can deny that it was in a great measure due to the zeal of M. Planchat, which carried all before it. Twice a day, provided with a pass from the commandant, he visited the barracks; of a morning, when the men went to drill, he was on the spot to take under his

charge those who were left behind on account of indisposition, and bring them to the *Patronage* to be warmed and cheered up ; in fact the *Patronage* became a convalescent home, a sort of little improvised ambulance, where many a poor young fellow passed three or four days of welcome rest, the maternal care he enjoyed there often being the means of averting serious illness. As for colds, headaches, and such trifling ailments, a day in a warm room was enough for them, this room being none other than that of the charitable director himself. His second visit to the barracks in the afternoon was not to the invalids, but to their comrades ; to these M. Planchat held out the attraction of games in the recreation rooms of the *Patronage*, and a welcome in the shape of a glass of beer. They were no slower to accept his invitation than the others had been, and as many as three hundred at a time would follow him to the Rue des Bois. From the recreation rooms they went to the chapel, every man receiving a "Soldier's Manual" (of these nearly four thousand copies were distributed), some hymns were sung and a short address was given, after which any one who wished could go to confession ; and so many availed themselves of this privilege that the confessions heard may be counted by thousands. The first comers invited their comrades to accompany them, so that on the morrow the numbers were doubled.

We have seen the Abbé Planchat multiplying himself, as it were, in order to alleviate the sufferings of the unhappy Mobiles, and procure for them the spiritual consolations which they wanted most of all. It will not astonish us to see how he sometimes left his work at St. Anne and hastened to the scene of the battles which were fought under the walls of Paris. We will give the account of the expeditions made to the outposts on two of the coldest nights of that exceptionally severe winter. That M. Planchat should thus

act as military chaplain was the last thing wanting to make him a complete type of self-abnegation, and it will suffice to silence those wicked men who, to excuse their own crimes, accuse the clergy of being indifferent to the misfortunes of their country, as well as antagonistic to the public welfare. We have seen how the Abbé Planchat loved the people, let us now see him in his intercourse with the soldiers.

“Not even the unprecedentedly severe cannonade from November 30 to December 1,* in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Anne, was allowed to interfere with our preparation for the First Communion, to take place on the 15th. But how could we retire to rest when we thought of the numbers who, wounded towards the close of the combat, were left lying uncared for on the battlefield when the darkness of night closed in? Some wounded men had already been brought to our ambulance, and we were told that there were others in the dépôt at the Montreuil gate. About ten o'clock at night we went thither, our party consisting of two doctors, two infirmarians, the Abbé X——, and the chaplain of St. Anne.

“At the Montreuil gate nothing was to be seen, so we proceeded to that of Vincennes, where the captain of the National Guard, in command of that post, hastened to place at our disposal the carriages he had requisitioned. With two cabs and an omnibus we set out for the Plaisance Circus, whither the wounded had in the first instance been brought.

“In the castle of that name we found several sufferers, all of whom, however, were on the eve of departure, having had their wounds dressed by the International Aid Society. All but four made their confession, and to these the Abbé X—— gave the last absolution.

* During the battle of Champigny.

“We were told that our services were greatly needed lower down by the river side, as there were seventeen men severely wounded in the house of a wine-merchant named Dominique. We did indeed find about that number of poor fellows, almost all mortally wounded, lying on straw in two rooms on the ground-floor—through the open windows of which the north wind was blowing—and a small room in the upper storey.

“‘How glad I am you have come,’ the doctor from Fort Nogent, who had hastened to the spot, said to one of us; ‘I should never have got away unless you had, and my own regiment wants me.’

“We all set to work directly. Only one soldier, whose wounds had been dressed, slipped out before the Abbé X—— could speak to him. All the others made their confession either to the Abbé X—— or myself, before they were transported elsewhere. Fortunately we had brought the oils with us. Here follows a series of touching incidents respecting our nocturnal expeditions.

“I put a medal round the neck of a soldier who was in his last agony; a bullet had entered his stomach, and internal hæmorrhage had ensued. The poor boy kissed both the medal and my large crucifix most affectionately, and was just about to begin his confession:

“‘But I am a Protestant,’ he said, ‘though I came from Besançon.’

“‘What difference can that make? Receive the consolations offered you by a Catholic priest, there is no minister of your own religion here. Beg pardon from God for all your sins, and especially for having professed a false religion—you may have been mistaken, you know.’

“I was anxious to get away for the sake of others, so I added little more. I felt no doubt as to the dying man having been baptized, considering the place of his birth. I

made him kiss the medal and crucifix again, and gave him absolution. He must have died shortly after, and I have every hope of his salvation.

“As soon as our work at Dominique’s was finished, a small house, full of wounded, two of whom were already dead, was pointed out to us down a narrow avenue, in which the artillery horses were picketed. As we went along we met the chaplain of Fort Nogent, who greeted us with the words, ‘You are on your way there? Many thanks! I have had scarcely any sleep for three nights, and I have been two days without saying Mass or opening my breviary; please show me what the Office is for this morning. Thank you; I will not forget to pray for you.’

“The spectacle awaiting us at ‘the Acacias’ was still more heartrending than it had been at Dominique’s house; the wounded were huddled together in a more horrible manner, and the last agony had, in many cases, evidently begun.

“We had brought with us two bottles of wine from Dominique’s, several of the wounded who were there having told us to keep them for those worse off than themselves; thus we were able to quench the thirst of several sufferers. But the one in the worst plight of all was a poor fellow whom the chaplain of St. Anne, assisted by a soldier belonging to the National Guard, a doctor and a tailor, had been obliged to lift on to the litter. Both his thighs were fractured, and the athletic frame lay bathed in its own blood, blood nobly shed, which was the first to dye the badge, as yet scarcely inaugurated, worn by the priest who, a few moments before, had cleansed in the Blood of Christ the priceless soul of the sufferer.

“Alongside of this poor fellow lay a young Bordelais. ‘Have you a medal?’ I asked him.

“‘I should rather think so—look at this chain. My

mother and sister gave me the two medals on it. Ah! I used often to go to Nôtre Dame des Verdélais.'

"Near the young Bordelais was a soldier who had made two confessions, one to me, before he was anointed, and another afterwards to the Abbé X——. They were so delighted, poor boys, to see a priest; the oftener one came to them the better.

"On leaving the Avenue des Acacias, we passed along a road which led through the bivouacs towards the Marne; we were anxious to cross that river, feeling only too sure that at the close of a terrible combat, prolonged far into the darkness, a great number of wounded must have been left helpless in their sufferings, and exposed to the biting frost of that dreadful night. But the bridge of boats was blocked up by our artillery trains, and behind the waggons which were passing over we saw a long line of troops waiting to follow in their wake.

"'We are only losing time here,' said the doctors; 'they say there are a great many wounded crowded together at Fontenay; let us go there at once.'

"Three omnibuses and two cabs, passing near, were stopped and requisitioned, and we set off. Guided by some vague directions from an old couple, who, hearing the wheels of the omnibuses in the deserted village street, had come to the window, we at last found the ambulance extemporized on the premises of the Pension M——.

"The doctors took in the state of affairs at a glance; they pronounced the men to be severely wounded, and decided that no time must be lost in removing them to St. Antoine. With the most praiseworthy zeal they at once set about dressing all the wounds with a view to the journey to Paris, being aided in their good work by some National Guards belonging to the place, as well as by the naval

officer, in whom the Abbé X—— had recognized a former companion at sea.

“ Meanwhile we looked after the souls of the sufferers.

“ ‘ What part do you come from ? ’

“ ‘ I come from l’Aube,’ one of the wounded answered.

“ ‘ You are a Mobile ? ’

“ ‘ Not I, but my son is ; I am fifty-two years old.’

“ ‘ Are you in great pain ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, yes, I am badly wounded ; but I do so rejoice to see a priest ; it is a long time since I last went to confession. My family is very respectable, and I made a good First Communion.’

“ He made his confession and received Extreme Unction, in most admirable dispositions. I helped to carry him to the omnibus, and took turns with the Abbé X—— in holding up his head and giving him a little water to drink.

“ During this stage of our journey, which, made at a foot’s pace from Fontenay to the Hospital of St. Antoine, seemed interminable, a thick cloak was added to the insufficient covering of the ambulance, and one of the National Guards stood on the step the whole time, to intercept the icy current of air which blew into the vehicle.

“ ‘ Jesus ! Mary ! Joseph ! ’ ejaculated the wounded man from time to time.

“ At the Vincennes gate our omnibus, which crawled along like a hearse, was received with a military salute. When we got to St. Antoine the Sisters vied with one another in their eagerness to administer some hot wine to the sufferer, who, alas ! was quite unable to keep down what he swallowed.

“ The visit paid to the ambulance at Fontenay was one of great consolation for the Abbé X——. His ministrations had been accepted with joyful gratitude by a young soldier from Périgord, who afterwards kept repeating to him : ‘ How

I wish, before I die, I could see the good curé who prepared me for my First Communion !’

“I gave this brave fellow a rosary. . ‘Where is the cross?’ he inquired, ‘let me kiss it.’

“Out of about twenty-five wounded, who were in this ambulance, at least twenty made their confession or received the last absolution. The others were conveyed at once to the Hospital of St. Antoine.”

The night of the 2nd to the 3rd of December.

“Having made our preparations as well as we could beforehand, from providing ourselves with a store of sugar and rum to the requisition of carriages, we hoped our expedition would be a successful one. Nevertheless, on arriving at the bridge of Joinville, at nine at night, we found crowded together a mass of vehicles which had been abandoned as useless. We were informed that the battle this time had not lasted long, so that there had been no difficulty in removing all the wounded ; but that if we were very anxious to meet with some, we should find a few left at Champigny, which was then being evacuated.

“When we got to the place where the high road of Champigny crosses the Villiers road, the doctors inquired where the wounded in question were to be found.

“‘Their wounds are already dressed ; the carriage you see in front of you is on its way to fetch the last,’ was the answer, shouted in reply to our doctors, by a party of men wearing the badge of the International Aid Society.

“‘Let us go to Bry,’ said the doctors.

“As we passed through the wood at Plant, we saw several quarries, sheltered by brushwood ; in each of the excavations our brave soldiers had made a bivouac, and were warming themselves as best they could whilst taking some food. We should have been delighted to visit each of these various

groups, if we could have made up our minds to give up all hope of finding the wounded.

“At a few paces from one of the barricades, we perceived lying in the wood, level with the road, a *képi* and a uniform slightly covered with straw. We raised the *képi*, and our hand came in contact with the ice-cold forehead of a gallant soldier who had died at his post.

“At a place where the Mulhouse line of railway crosses the road, opposite the plateau of Cailly, we came upon the skeletons of some horses which had been killed that very day, and cut up so skilfully by the hungry combatants, that no dissecting-knife in the theatre of a hospital could have done its work more neatly.

“At last we got to Bry-sur-Marne, where the traces of a recent struggle were more discernible than they had been elsewhere; dead bodies of men and horses, not yet cold, lying side by side at the foot of the vines; barn-doors riddled by bullets; barricades overturned; and yet no traces of the wounded to be seen anywhere. A captain of Zouaves, whom we questioned, told us there must be some wounded close to the Prussian outposts; adding, ‘If you like to go there, it is your own affair; but you must remember that the Prussians fire on the ambulances.’

“Whilst our doctors were consulting together, the Abbé X—— descried a Zouave promenading the village square with a thoughtful air. When he returned to my side a short time after, the abbé said to me: ‘My time to-night has not been all wasted, I have confessed a soldier.’

“Stimulated by his example, I approached a group of men advancing towards us on the road leading from Bry to the Marne. Singling out one, I sent the other two to the Abbé X——.

“‘You are from the south, my friend?’ I said to my prisoner.

“ ‘Yes, from the neighbourhood of Tarbes.’

“ ‘Then you know Our Lady of Lourdes?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘What was your occupation before the war broke out?’

“ ‘Oh, I had been some time in Paris.’

“ ‘What did you do there?’

“ ‘I was one of the professors at the Lyceum.’

“ ‘What class did you teach?’

“ ‘All and any. I was assistant professor.’

“ ‘Have you taken your degree?’

“ ‘Well, I studied for it, but I had not the perseverance to go on long enough. But at any rate, the knowledge I acquired was of use as it enabled me to read Latin authors in the original.’

“ ‘Have you read Juvenal too?’

“ ‘He is rather coarse at times. That makes one feel how superior Christians are to pagans.’

“ ‘Since you are a Christian, take this opportunity of cleansing your conscience. You will feel more comfortable when you go into action.’

“ ‘All right.’

“ ‘Just as we had done our business, the Abbé X—— came up, having finished off his two men. A few steps further on, we reached a barricade; M. X—— took two of the sentries in hand, I attacked the third, who was crouching in a corner with his musket between his knees.

“ ‘And you, who seem afraid of going to confession, where do you come from?’

“ ‘From Picardy.’

“ ‘From Picardy! then there can be no hesitation! Quick, my child, begin at once.’

“ ‘The soldier did as I bade him.

“ ‘But where was our carriage gone to? Down yonder to the riverside.

“ We had walked about twenty minutes along the bank, thinking to overtake it, when M. X—— observed that the bridge of boats up the river had been cut, so that our party must have gone in the direction of the lower one, and we retraced our steps.

“ Soon we came upon a bivouac of artillerymen, really very polite people, who kindly invited us to share their shelter, assuring us that the situation was not a bad one. I left M. X—— to tackle the speaker, as I felt sure that there would be no difficulty in getting him to confession; then moving out of ear-shot, I roused up two men asleep under their wraps.

“ ‘What countryman are you?’ I asked the first.

“ ‘A Savoyard from Annecy, forced to call myself French.’

“ ‘Then you have often prayed at the tomb of St. Francis of Sales?’

“ ‘Yes, indeed.’

“ ‘And when did you last go to confession?’

“ ‘I went at Pentecost.’

“ ‘That is some time ago, for one who will soon have to face the enemy.’ Another confession was forthwith made.

“ ‘Now tell me where are you from?’ I called out to the other.

“ ‘I come from Toulouse.’

“ ‘Then you know St. Germain?’

“ ‘Certainly I do. I have been there.’

“ ‘And your last confession?’

“ ‘It was on the fifteenth of August.’

“ ‘Well, then, let us begin again now.’

“ ‘With all my heart!’

“ Seeing me get up, the Abbé X—— whispered to me: ‘There was no getting my man to confess. He is a free-thinker!’

“ ‘Which way is the bridge over the Marne?’

“ ‘A little farther on, close by here.’

As we went along, a formidable ‘Who goes there?’ sounded from the opposite bank.

“ ‘Two Ambulance Chaplains who have lost their carriage and want to find the bridge of boats; are you going there too?’

“ ‘You will get to it directly.’

“We met our interlocutors on the bridge, and as we walked along, the Abbé X—— and I both confessed two soldiers. On the other side the fires of a bivouac gleamed brightly, and ‘Qui vive!’ sounded in our ears.

“ ‘An Ambulance Chaplain.’

“ ‘It is a quarter to twelve,’ said the Abbé X——. ‘Let us have a little drop of rum, and give some to the sentries. After they have taken this corporal consolation, they will surely not refuse the spiritual.’

“ ‘Where do you come from?’ he inquired of the man to whom he had just given the cordial.

“ ‘From Seine-et-Marne.’

“ ‘A few weeks ago I preached to some comrades of yours at the Séminaire du St. Esprit, and better still, I heard their confessions. Will you follow their example?’

“ ‘Willingly enough.’ The man I spoke to came from Pas-du-Calais.

“ ‘I know Artois very well; I have been all over it; I lived at Arras for a year and a half. Your country-people are essentially religious. You are in the habit of going to confession?’

“ ‘Oh, yes.’

“The third sentry came from Seine-et-Oise. We got him over like the others, and asked for the Nogent road, which we were told was close by.

“Following its course, we were grieved to observe that only one arch of the magnificent Mulhouse Viaduct was

left standing. Presently we came upon a party of soldiers dragging themselves along, evidently worn out with fatigue. 'Where do you come from, my poor fellows?' we inquired.

"'From Mont Valérien,' answered one.

"'I come much farther than that,' said another, 'from Argenteuil. We have seen those Prussians, but now we must rejoin the main part of our regiment encamped below Villiers.'

"'They were afraid to go on any further, so I had to put off from Fort Nogent to fetch them.'

"'Ah, you are a sailor!' exclaimed the Abbé X—recognizing the nautical term and the seaman's cap of the last speaker; 'I was once in the navy; let me have a word with you; you ought to set a good example to those under your guidance.'

"'The sailor made his confession; then he said several times to his companions: 'Look here, we must not let religion die out; it will not do to let our children grow up heathens.'

"'The four seamen were all led to make their confession. One was more difficult to persuade than the others; he had something on his mind.

"'To think my village home and my poor wife are only three miles off? Oh! those Prussians, if I only could get hold of them!'

"'Come, come, let us settle our business together,' I said to him; 'it will make you able to take surer aim.' The confession was forthwith made.

"'As we walked up the first street in Nogent, a fresh challenge sounded in our ears. 'Who goes there?'

"'An Ambulance Chaplain. Where do you come from?'

"'We come from Alsace.'

"'Then you are Protestants, perhaps?'

“‘Yes, we are ; but none the worse friends with priests for that !’

“‘Would you like a medal ?’

“‘Oh, I don’t care about that sort of thing myself !’

“‘Well, here is my card ; if you should be passing through the Faubourg, come and see me.’

“‘It happens I know some people who live there.’

“‘Good-night.’

“On entering the market-place at Nogent, we were received with a triple ‘Qui vive ?’

“‘Ambulance Chaplains ! What post is this ?’

“‘Mayoralty of Nogent.’

“‘Who are in charge of it ?’

“‘Troops of the line.’

“‘Would you like to go to confession ?’

“Thereupon each of the three sentries made his confession, leaning on his musket.

“Going down towards the Bois de Vincennes, just as we reached the place where the main road intersects that of the Val du Plaisance, we heard ourselves hailed.

“‘Where is Joinville ? We have fallen behind with our waggon.’

“‘It is very cold and you must be tired. First of all finish our rum and sugar, then we will show you the way afterwards. You are no strangers to us ; only last week we had you with us in our Chapel of St. Anne. But why should we not go with you ? We may as well return to Paris by way of Joinville.’

“As we went along, all the twelve Mobiles who formed the escort of the waggon, as well as the drivers, made their confession. Joinville was not yet in sight, but we descried fires gleaming brightly through the copse on our right.

“‘Here at least are some of your comrades ; thank you, we shall find our way all right now.’

“We left our convoy and made an attack on the bivouacs. Seeing a cab standing in the road, we inquired of the driver whether he were disengaged.

“‘No, I am waiting for Count R—— to come and pay me.’

“‘How long will it be, do you think, before you are at liberty?’

“‘He must be with his men. I daresay he will be back in an hour’s time.’

“That hour was spent in prosecuting our apostolic conquests.

“‘Now then, you will make your confession like your comrades?’ I said to a soldier, whom I observed taking himself off alone.

“‘Oh, it is too cold for that; I am looking for wood.’

“‘Let me help you.’ I dragged a little tree, which I had found ready felled, up to where he was; and he presently made his confession.

“‘How many have you heard?’ I asked the Abbé X—— when we got back to the carriage.

“‘Three or four,’ he replied; ‘they did not seem to care about it.’

“‘I managed to catch as many as fifteen, I am happy to say.’

“Meanwhile, Count R—— did not make his appearance, and we installed ourselves for the time in his conveyance. After half-an-hour’s nap we determined to return to Paris on foot. My persistency in trusting to my own calculations rather than to the instinctive accuracy with which the naval officer could find his bearings, brought on us the disagreeable of losing our way and wandering in the wood for three quarters of an hour. At last we got to Vincennes, where we ventured to ask the sentry on guard at the Mayoralty, the shortest way to Paris. His only reply was to bid us

be off. This man, a National Guardsman of the place, apparently had a strict sense of duty.

“At the gates we met with more politeness. The Chaplain of St. Anne was allowed to pass, although he could not produce either his card or his badge.

“It was half-past six in the morning when we crossed the threshold of our dear little chapel in the Rue des Bois.”

Account of a domiciliary visit.

The following account may be relied on as authentic; it is related by M. Planchat himself, and was discovered amongst his papers after his death. It would be impossible to identify the persons who play a part in the narrative, as the House of St. Anne was searched no less than five different times. We feel that we cannot pass over in silence an incident which records one of the most signal triumphs of M. Planchat's apostolic career, and may moreover teach us to make allowances for men who, although led away to act in a manner contrary to their inmost convictions, are yet often found to possess no small amount of good feeling.

“One day the porter came running to me in great consternation.

“‘I have often warned M. Decaux,’ he exclaimed, ‘that the club of the Boulevard Charonne had decreed that our House should be closed! Now here they are! Here they are! two hundred armed men, with their commander at their head!’

“The chaplain commended himself to God, and went to confront the danger. ‘What do you want with me?’

“‘I want to know why such numbers of Mobiles come here.’

“‘When you give an order to your men, do you blame them for carrying it out? Well, let me tell you I have had an interview with all the commanders of the various

battalions of Mobiles which have successively been quartered in the barracks on the Boulevards, and that they all approved of their men coming here. You have no doubt heard people speak of that gallant Commander, the Count de Dampierre? I am sure you would be no less ready than he was to lay down his life on the field of glory. Do you know that his successor came here last Tuesday, with eight hundred of his men, to be present at the service for the Count de Dampierre? Afterwards he paid a visit of inspection to the house, the recreation rooms, and the gymnasium, and said he was delighted that his men should come here.'

"'It is well enough for them to come in the day-time, if it amuses them. But what business have they in your chapel, after six o'clock in the evening?'

"'They come to pray, sing hymns, and listen to an address instead of frequenting objectionable places of resort; and their officers are very glad they should come. Besides, some of the National Guard are almost always present at our meetings, they can tell you all that is said there.'

"'If the officers of the Mobiles like your sermons, let me tell you we do not. There is a motto which we find everywhere in your Houses: For God, our Country, and the King!'

"'We sang the *Domine salvum fac rempublicam* on September 4, before any orders to do so had been issued.'

"'You sang it with your lips and not your heart. Just before that you sang the *Domine salvum fac Imperatorem!*'

"'So you sang the *Te Deum* on August 15!'

"'Here a National Guard interrupted the speaker with the words: 'Give the priest a gun!'

"'You will want somebody in the ambulances to take care of you, if you are wounded.'

“ ‘All the Seminarists go and hide there. We will turn them out. Have we not our wives to take care of us?’

“ ‘If you, and the local government, and the Commanders of the Mobiles, are not of one mind, try to come to an understanding amongst yourselves, and let me go on with my work.’

“ ‘I smell something nice in your kitchen,’ said a franc-tireur; ‘I expect you fare well, whilst we get nothing but garlic soup.’

“ ‘I have little doubt that if I took the liberty of violating the privacy of your home, I should find something quite as good as the ragoût of horseflesh you think so tempting. At any rate, if you fare badly as to food, I see very plainly you get plenty to drink.’

“The leader of the party ordered the franc-tireur who had interrupted him to be silent, then addressing me he continued: ‘Let me tell you, Abbé Planchat, that we recognize neither General Trochu, nor the Commanders of those Mobiles.’

“ ‘Who then constitutes the Government?’

“ ‘We do,’ cried a National Guardsman, so terribly drunk that he could hardly keep on his legs.

“ ‘Your government is far too unsteady for me to receive its orders.’

“Thereupon I closed my door in a determined manner in the very face of the leader, who appeared somewhat abashed when I spoke of violating the privacy of a dwelling-house. He took himself off with about twelve men armed with bayonets; the rest of the two hundred having already deserted him.

“The next day I heard that this officer, who had led a disorderly life, was going to be married before the civil authorities on the morrow. I then remembered that two years before, I had at his request, got the Brothers to take

in his son, a boy of twelve. The next morning, at break of day, I repaired to my persecutor's house.

“ ‘May I come in? I should be sorry to violate your home. You thought to do me an ill turn yesterday, I want do you a good one to-day. You are going to be married at the mayoralty; so far you are right, but you seem to have forgotten the Church. Let me offer you the use of my Chapel to-night, I will get the necessary licence.’

“ ‘M. l'Abbé, it was not of my own accord I came to you yesterday. I have been baptized, and I made my First Communion; what little I do know, I owe to the Brothers. You see I am not quite so bad as you think me. I will accept your offer.’

“ ‘You give me your word for it?’

“ ‘With all my heart.’

“ In fact, at six o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, November 9, I married the good man in my Chapel, and gave Communion to his wife the next morning at my Mass.”

CHAPTER VII.

HIS CAPTIVITY.

ON the Boulevard de Charonne, not far from the chapel dedicated to St. Anne, the patroness of Brittany, within whose walls the young Breton soldiers deemed it a privilege to kneel in prayer before they went to shed their blood for the salvation of their country, not far from the peaceful house of God, within whose walls the Abbé Planchat devoted himself to prayer, or works of mercy and reconciliation, there existed a club.

The atmosphere of this club reeked with hatred, rage, lies, and blasphemy; and its leaders, instead of marching to confront the Prussians and drive them out of France, only thought how they could drive the Brothers out of their schools, the Sisters of Charity out of their hospitals; and only used their guns, if they had any guns at all, to fire upon priests.

These men were awaiting the moment of their coming into power; a moment that could not be far distant. On **March 18**, when the insurgents had made themselves masters of the city and had assumed the reins of government, the members of this club, triumphant at last, did not think it beneath them to begin reprisals by an attack on the humble establishment in the Rue des Bois. A band of rebels burst into the house, in order to seize the four thousand chassepots supposed to be concealed there; they

ransacked the house from top to bottom, even turning up the sand laid down in the gymnasium.

Ten days later, on Tuesday, March 21, a delegate from the 74th Federal Battalion caused the house to be invested, and demanded to see the chaplain's correspondence, in order to confiscate a letter from Versailles. This search proved as signal a failure as the former, for the harmless correspondence of the Abbé Planchat offered nothing that could possibly compromise him, and the delegate was obliged to go away without having found what he sought.

These repeated persecutions (the House of St. Anne underwent as many as five domiciliary visits) boded no good, and ought to have induced M. Planchat to adopt some precautionary measures, and to restrain, at least for a time, the practical action of his zeal. But no such thought ever crossed his mind; the Easter retreat for apprentices and young artisans was approaching, and he began to prepare for it, just as he had done in more peaceful times, summoning to his aid preachers and confessors, seeking out absentees, in the hope of inducing them to come to the *Patronage* again, and visiting the families of his boys, in order to persuade their relatives likewise to join the retreat. An utter stranger to the political excitement rife all around him, he only thought how he could get his spiritual children to make as good an Easter Communion as possible. The retreat at the *Patronage* was begun, as usual, on Palm Sunday, April 2, and was continued on the evenings of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Holy Week. A devout and attentive audience filled the chapel, but the state of affairs out of doors was daily becoming more and more menacing. On the eve of Palm Sunday several arrests had been made amongst the clergy; the Archbishop and his Vicars-General, with several parish priests, having been put in prison during

the first few days of Holy Week. On Holy Thursday, April 6, an official notice was sent to the House of St. Anne, apprising M. Planchat that an arrest was about to be made there. The priests who shared his labours, urged him to betake himself at once to a neighbouring house, where a place of refuge had been offered to him. This he refused to do, alleging that he had an appointment with two persons whose confessions he was going to hear. About two in the afternoon, just when he was in the act of distributing to the mothers of the children who were about to make their First Communion the different articles of clothing which would be wanted for the occasion, a commissary from the Commune made his appearance, pistol in hand, and accompanied by his secretary, who was similarly armed. The house was surrounded, and the Abbé Planchat, having been arrested, was marched away by the secretary, who was in plain clothes, and carried a loaded pistol in his pocket, ready for an emergency. The lay-director of the *Patronage* was also arrested and conducted by three National Guards to the guard-house in the Rue des Amandiers; after being detained there four hours, he was however set at liberty. Meanwhile M. Planchat was taken to the Bureau du Commissaire in the Rue des Cendriers, where the usual questions were put to him; then he was conducted, with a strong escort of the National Guard, to the mayoralty of the twentieth Arrondissement. Arrested, as was his Divine Master, on the afternoon of Holy Thursday, he had, like Him, to suffer a thousand insults as he went along from the inhabitants of the quarter through which he passed; men, women, and children following with cries of execration him who had invariably been their benefactor. It is said that one boy went so far as to strike him with a stick. Such was the beginning of the long martyrdom to which this innocent victim was

subjected ; he bore the insults in silence, going on his way with bowed head, doubtless praying for his persecutors. On reaching the mayoralty, he was shut up in a damp and unwholesome little room adjoining the guard-house ; there he passed part of this sorrowful night, shivering with cold and unable to take any rest. Presently the officer took pity on him and put him into the guard-room. It is certain that in such a place the holy priest could not but be exposed to fresh outrages ; but it is equally certain that he rejoiced in this as affording a fresh point of conformity to his Divine Lord. He may perhaps have been able to say his breviary, and there is no doubt that he found abundant consolation in the prayers of the Church, and in applying to his own case the portions of Scripture appointed for that season. The next morning the porter of the *Patronage* brought him a cloak and some provisions ; the worthy man was arrested on the spot, and conducted together with the Abbé, at about ten o'clock in the morning, to the station-house in the Rue des Amandiers. M. Planchat had fresh insults to endure from the populace on his way ; one woman cried out : "He ought to be shot ! those are the people who sell us and betray us !" and a child threw mud at him. This was Good Friday. As soon as they reached the station-house they learned that they were to be taken to the Prefecture of Police, and the Abbé begged as a favour that a conveyance might be provided for him. His request was granted, and a cab having been fetched, M. Planchat, the porter, and a soldier, entered it. The vehicle set off at a foot-pace, escorted by a detachment of the National Guard.

In this manner they arrived at the dépôt of the Prefecture, where the Abbé Planchat was thrust into a large room, in which twenty-five priests were already confined. They had all been arrested during the week which is the

most sacred of the whole year, and which had been expressly selected by the Commune for the purpose of executing that part of its programme which it was most desirous of accomplishing, namely, the desecration of churches and the imprisonment of priests. Almost all the priests who shared M. Planchat's captivity were later on the companions of his martyrdom. Immediately on his arrival amongst them, he made his confession to Père Chauveau, of the Rue des Postes. The new comer was the only one present possessed of a breviary, and he forthwith placed it at the disposal of his fellow-priests, who in the hurry of departure had been unable to bring away theirs with them. They were extremely glad of the loan, and M. Planchat was no less glad of the opportunity afforded him, under such circumstances, of performing one more kind action towards his brethren. But ere he had been many hours in their company he was fetched away by a gaoler to be placed in solitary confinement; this was a great trial to one of so sociable a disposition, and the good priests themselves, who had speedily made friends with the "Apostle of the People," felt sincere regret at losing him from their midst. In a very short time, however, they got back the breviary, M. Planchat being quite able to do without it; accustomed as he was to recite his Office in the street, often before dawn or after nightfall, he had committed almost all the psalms to memory, and only required a few notes as a guide. Thus, after copying out what he did not know by heart, he was able to spare the book, for a few days at least, to the prisoners, who were greatly touched by this kind thoughtfulness on his part. The well-worn breviary was in keeping with the poverty his whole exterior displayed, and his fellow-priests, edified by the virtue thus brought to light, hastened to inform him that their purse was at his disposal. M. Planchat refused the offer as far as he personally was concerned;

but whilst habitually forgetful of self, he always remembered the needs of others, and gratefully accepted the proffered assistance for his brethren at St. Anne, whom his hurried departure left without funds.

The cell in which he was confined was only about nine or ten feet wide and sixteen or seventeen feet long ; it was miserably lighted by one window, high up in the wall and guarded by a grating ; the furniture of the narrow apartment consisted of an iron bedstead unprovided with sheets and fixed against the wall, a wooden stool and a slab serving for a table, besides an earthenware basin, two brooms, and a tin can. At daybreak, one of the warders came in to turn out the gas, take away the dust, and bring some water. At seven, a loaf of munition bread was passed through the grating in the door ; at eight, a basin of bouillon was brought, and at three, a ration of meat or vegetables. Such was the prison regimen, and to this M. Planchat and his companions were subjected until the Thursday after Easter, April 13.

About the middle of that day, the hostages received notice that they were to be removed to the Mazas ; they were conducted out of their cells into a long corridor, where they had to wait for some time. All were assembled there, twenty-five out of the number being ecclesiastics, and these latter, with the exception of four or five, wore their clerical dress. They were able to discuss at leisure the situation in which they were placed, and the greater or less chance of deliverance which their change of prison might afford them. After waiting an hour, they were informed that the conveyances not being ready, they must return to their cells, which however they were once more ordered to vacate at about three o'clock. On descending into the courtyard, where a detachment of National Guards was drawn up under arms, they were obliged to enter the police vans

immediately. This was the greatest hardship they had to endure throughout their captivity. In these vans each prisoner is locked into a compartment so small as to render any change of position impossible, and so ill-ventilated as to threaten suffocation. Through a refinement of cruelty, the prisoners were, upon the present occasion, in spite of all their complaints and entreaties, left locked in for nearly half an hour before the ventilators were opened, and several nearly fainted in consequence.

At last the Mazas Prison was reached. A double line of Federal soldiers was drawn up round the courtyard, which had to be traversed before arriving at the vestibule of the prison. There a series of vexatious formalities had to be gone through. First of all, the captives were thrust one after another into cells where they were left waiting for an hour, then they were removed into other temporary cells, having doors opening into the principal bureau; lastly, these doors being unlocked, the prisoners found themselves in the presence of three officials, who asked their names, surnames, &c. After this, they had to enter another office, where a list was made of everything they had on them before they were consigned to their several places of confinement, which appear to have been precisely similar to those of their former prison, the interior arrangements and order of meals being also the same. Every precaution was taken to prevent the prisoners from hearing any news, or holding communication with the outside world, or so much as seeing their fellow-captives. A very fair selection of books were placed at their disposal, and an hour's exercise in a small courtyard was allowed them; this was, however, to be taken singly, and under the surveillance of the warders. The eleventh cell of the third ward was the one allotted to M. Planchat, and there he was confined for thirty-eight days. One can readily imagine how severe a

trial this forced inaction was to his ardent nature, accustomed to a life of continual intercourse with others, of all-absorbing activity; no change could have been more complete. Even the consolation of saying Mass was inexorably denied to the priests, although this would have been quite easy, as there was a chapel in the prison, and express provision was made for it in the prison rules. They were therefore obliged to confine themselves to reciting the prayers of the Mass. One of the hostages whose life was saved, subsequently told me with a smile that on Sundays he used to sing the *Credo*, to mark the festival. A relaxation of the rule with regard to supplying the prisoners with provisions from without, was taken advantage of as affording the means of transmitting the Holy Eucharist to them. We have reason to believe that whilst at the Mazas, the Jesuit Fathers alone enjoyed this inestimable privilege, on account of the impossibility of intercommunication between the captives. In general, the treatment the hostages met with from the governor and warders of the prison fell far short of what it might have been, as is proved by the answer made by the Archbishop of Paris to one of the few visitors who were permitted to have access to him.

"I have been told, Monseigneur," said this individual, "that you are more than satisfied with the way in which you are treated in this prison."

"For the matter of that, sir," replied the prelate, with that perfect gentleness which was habitual to him, "I merely remarked that I did not intend to complain of any one."

There is not a single word or act of these saintly victims that does not breathe forth the most perfect resignation and celestial sweetness. All the wearisome hours of their confinement were spent by them in prayer, spiritual reading, and all the pious exercises belonging to a retreat, and thus they tranquilly prepared themselves for the tragic end they

knew to be most probably awaiting them. We shall ere long see them go forth to meet death as simply and calmly as if they were only going to perform one of the ordinary duties of their ministry ; as if they were about to say Mass, teach a class of pupils, or administer the sacraments. Nothing grander than this is recorded in the annals of ecclesiastical history.

The Rev. Father Sosthène Duval, of the Congregation of Picpus, one of the hostages who escaped death, gives us some interesting details as to the manner in which M. Planchat sanctified the sufferings attendant on his long captivity at the Mazas. These particulars were gathered from his own lips during a recreation which the captives took together, whilst they were imprisoned in La Roquette.

“Since the outbreak of the war,” writes this Father, “M. Planchat had several times requested me to assist him in his labours amongst the soldiers, and also to hear the confessions of his boys at St. Anne ; thus I enjoyed many opportunities of admiring his fervent zeal for souls, and gladly do I pay my tribute of respect to his memory, since I consider that the privilege of knowing M. Planchat, of seeing all he did for others, and myself receiving advice and exhortation from his lips, is not the least of the many favours bestowed upon me by a merciful Providence. It was on Tuesday, May 23, the day after I entered La Roquette, that on descending into the courtyard, where all the hostages of our section had just come down for recreation, I saw M. Planchat, although I did not recognize him at the first moment. He was alone, so I accosted him, and we spent the time of recreation together. He told me how terribly he had suffered from inaction and want of exercise during his captivity at Mazas. He said he had made a rule for his day, rising always at four, and having fixed hours for his various religious exercises, all of which he

scrupulously performed, not omitting to offer the Holy Sacrifice in spirit. I believe he spent about seven hours in pacing up and down, for, he said, had he not done this, his digestion and his brain would have been seriously affected."

Thus it will be seen that the Abbé Planchat bore the trial of his painful captivity with the same holy resignation his fellow-captives displayed. The intolerable weariness of the enforced seclusion might weaken his physical strength and mental power, but could not diminish his ardent love for souls. His sick and his children were never absent from his thoughts, especially those boys whose preparation for their First Communion had been left unfinished. Many were the notes, written with his usual frankness and simplicity, which he sent from his prison cell to different charitable persons, to poor people or children. It is most edifying to witness the conflict which went on in the heart of this apostle, who, whilst struggling to resign himself, was yet tortured by the thought of the spiritual needs of others; this thought causing him far more pain than all his own sufferings.

"I beg that you will all pray earnestly for me that this trial may be for my good," he writes from Mazas on April 25. "If during my enforced retreat I did but know how to meditate, when alone with God, on the means of making myself a little less brusque, a little more useful to those who ask of me aid and counsel, this would not be lost time for myself or others. If anything could make the hours seem long, it is the consciousness that my friends are anxious about me, that the sick long to see me again, that my dear apprentice boys have not made their First Communion. Next Sunday will be the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph; ask him to obtain my release for the sake of others, if this be in accordance with the will of God."

In another letter, dated April 30, the feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, written to a lady whose son he had been in the habit of visiting almost daily during a recent illness, we find the same all-absorbing anxiety for the spiritual good of others, and perhaps even greater gentleness and tenderness of feeling.

“ I must hasten to tell you how deeply touched I am by your kind remembrance of me. Your card, left by yourself, is sufficient proof how much you wished to see me ; but even my own brother has not been able to succeed in doing this. Let us pray that this civil war may soon be at an end : no separations are as cruel as those which it causes. I cannot deny that I suffer much in being thus torn from my sick, my apprentices, my poor, and deprived of the consolations afforded me by the exercise of my sacred ministry. But what proves to me that those friends who are constantly present to my thoughts do not forget me in their prayers is the fact that I can feel resigned to my lot, that I cherish no ill-will against any one, and only pray for the enlightenment of those persons who imagine me to have any other object in view than that of doing what little I can towards the alleviation of suffering. I hope you will ask these favours of St. Joseph, and that your dear invalid will do the same. Pray keep for him all the delicacies which you may be thinking of bringing me. I shall be most grateful if you will do so, as I have now no opportunity of giving him anything myself.

“ In one of the first days of my captivity, I wrote to a good priest of Ste. Marguerite, the Abbé G——, who was a fellow-student of mine at the Seminary, in order to ask him to go and see our dear invalid ; I have no doubt that his visits have often proved a comfort to him. Please tell him, with my love, that I remember him specially in my prayers every day.”

Dated May 8.

“My dear Friend,—You must have come yourself to Mazas, since your card was left with the good things which you were so kind as to send me. Thank God, you seem getting strong again now. During this month of Mary I shall pray so earnestly to our Blessed Lady, (and I know you will do the same) that she will surely find some employment for your dear mother and yourself.

“Many thanks for your kind remembrance of me. The freshly-gathered bouquet of wild flowers would alone have been enough, its fragrance is not two powerful in my narrow cell, even at night. Do take care of yourself, my dear friend ; do nothing imprudent. Let me have some news of your good mother and yourself. You can send a letter by post. Be sure to tell me whether you have made the Abbé G——’s acquaintance. I suppose you went to him at any rate for your Easter,” &c.

“ Mazas, May 8.

“The tears came into my eyes as I read your note last Saturday. I had just finished the first Vespers for the Apparition of St. Michael, and I felt myself inspired to commend the approaching First Communion, and all whom you with so much courage are in general preparing for it, to the protecting care of the Prince of Angels, as well as to the angel guardian of each one in particular. I should like you all to join with me in the novena I began yesterday for the First Communion, to take place on the Ascension. You might say one Hail Mary with the invocation, ‘ St. Michael, pray for us—holy Angels Guardian, pray for us,’ at the close of each instruction from now until the day of Communion. Perhaps you might be able to say the same prayers every day after dinner, before the statue on our Month of Mary altar. It would be very kind if on both those

occasions, you would make my release one of your intentions. I have already made an offering to our Lady of my wish to be present at the First Communion. May this sacrifice be accepted on behalf of our dear children and all their relatives now preparing for it. If God saw that my presence at St. Anne on that happy day would be of any real use, He could easily bring it about in answer to your prayers. I confess that I should thank Him from the bottom of my heart, and that in the joy of that moment, all past troubles and future anxieties would be forgotten. . . . How shall you manage about the Confirmation? Mgr. Buquet must be very much taken up if he is in Paris. The simplest way perhaps would be to attend the Confirmation at the parish church, especially as the absence of so many boarding-schools must leave plenty of room. If there is no Confirmation at Charonne, you could go to any church where one may happen to be held during the days immediately following the Ascension. There is so little work doing now, that I daresay it would be almost as easy for the apprentices who have not been confirmed to accompany the first communicants on a week day now, as it was formerly on a Sunday.

“Thank good Father G—— for his willing help. As for you, I will not attempt to thank you. I should never have done, but I shall redouble my prayers for you, not forgetting,” &c.

“*Mazas, May 12.*”

“You must see if there are rosaries enough left for all the children. Never were prayers more needed both for the children and for me than they are now. If the rosaries run short, I am sure M. Alcan, 11, Rue d’Assas, will let you have some for my sake, now that I am a prisoner. I fully hope that the Blessed Virgin will bless your generous

exertions about this First Communion, which is to be made during her month ; I pray earnestly for it, and I ask you to pray for me ; I am not exactly disheartened, but my poor brain grows very weary."

Each word of these short notes, written in a minor key, awakens a mournful echo in the heart of the reader. They are indeed more of a prayer than a complaint, and one may almost fancy one hears in them the sighs of the poor captive, so resigned to the will of God, so tenderly anxious for the good of souls. The love of Jesus, and of the souls of those little ones whom he was preparing to receive Him, breathes forth in every line. This First Communion, and all details connected with it, form the constant subject of his thoughts. For this he offers his petitions, his sufferings, his acts of resignation ; and for this he anticipates willingly, even hopefully, the last and greatest sacrifice. On this his mind dwells continually, throughout the sorrowful days and tedious nights, and the thought of it will only leave him at his latest breath. He will intercede for his little apprentice boys of St. Anne and especially for the first communicants, while his heart continues to throb, while life and being last ; nor is this all, he will surely not forget them before the throne of God, whither his soul will mount triumphant, when she wings her upward flight from the blood-stained pavement of the Rue Haxo.

" *Mazas, May 13.*

" I hasten to let you know that the Abbé H——, from Nazareth, will be at St. Anne during part of next Monday and Tuesday (you can learn the exact time by asking at the *Patronage*) for the First Communion retreat. This will afford you an excellent opportunity, firstly, of fulfilling your Easter duty or going to Communion for the great

festival of the Ascension; secondly, of thanking a former benefactor of your excellent mother.

“I cannot say I am ill, but my nights are much broken and disturbed. My head feels as if something were bound tightly round it; my nerves are very irritable. This mode of life is just the reverse of what suits my physical constitution, and it is equally irksome to my moral nature. Entreat the merciful intercession of the Blessed Virgin; if she would only set me free for my children’s First Communion. However, I wish for nothing but what God wills, and rejoice at having an additional sacrifice to offer him.”

“*Mazas, May 13.*”

“Forgive me for entering into so many details about my food, it is very wearisome to me, and I only do it from a sense of duty, especially as all this is not life to me, or free play for my brain. What I really need is air and exercise, power to talk, the life of the affections, my accustomed ministrations amongst my dear poor, my sick and my children; in a word, all those things of which I must be deprived as long as I am in prison.”

Comment would only serve to weaken the effect of these edifying pages, which are, so to speak, perfumed with fragrance from that paradise, whose gates were destined ere long to open and admit the writer. His charity increased in proportion as the termination of his sufferings approached, as is proved by the following letter, which, doubtless the last written from Mazas, shall be given entire :

“*Mazas, No. 11, 3rd Division, May 19, 1871.*”

“Dear Madam,—I cannot imagine how I have allowed *time to run on* since my imprisonment on April 6 without

having ever thought of writing to beg for your prayers and those of the pious persons with whom you are acquainted. However, now is the most important time of all to do so, since at this very moment the Commune is occupied in deliberating, not upon the liberation, but the execution of the priests. Perhaps even now you might not have recurred to my mind, but for what I heard from my mother, who is making every effort on my behalf, despite her well-founded fears for me, fears which I myself share, although I resign myself entirely to God and our Blessed Lady. I refer to the sad intelligence of the death of Mr. P——, of which my mother told me ; she also said she thought his relatives were at Grenelle. But when I saw you last year at St. Anne, I believe I understood you to say they were residing at Le Marais, where they had an ambulance. At any rate, it is through you that I must hope to express to them the deep sympathy I feel for them in their affliction. Will you kindly let them know this, either by word of mouth, or by sending this letter to them. I am fully convinced that Mr. P—— died a Christian death ; the prayers and good works so long offered up by those ladies on his behalf could not fail to have obtained for one so noble-minded, so truly upright, the removal, if only at the last moment, of the veil of prejudices by which many a man in good faith is blindfolded.

“At all events, I should have felt it a duty and a pleasure to say some Masses for a soul so dear to me, but alas ! ever since Holy Thursday I have not heard, much less celebrated, a single Mass, nor have I been able to go to confession. I must offer to God, as well as I can, this painful privation, the greatest of all to me ; I have offered it, in part at least, for Mr. P——’s soul, ever since the news of his death reached me. To this I will add not exactly any special prayers, but the intentions of several forming a

portion of my daily rule, which I manage to keep with tolerable accuracy. I cannot burden my poor head with anything more: the prison routine tries it severely.

“Do not imagine that I forget you and your good works; I am sure you in your turn do not forget my poor *Patronage*. Please pray very specially for the Easter First Communion. I thought I had done a great deal by deferring it until the Thursday after Low Sunday, in order that everything might not be crowded together; however, a letter written eighteen days ago, and only finished on the 12th, informed me that it was finally fixed for the Ascension. Yesterday my mother told me that prudence forbade any steps to be taken in the matter. This was a great blow to me, so little am I as yet advanced in holy indifference. I have to a great extent got over it now, though it cost me a night's rest.

“I need your prayers now in a threefold sense, in order that I may hold myself in constant readiness to receive the fatal blow, which may fall at any time without previous warning and without opportunity for confession, and that I may maintain myself in unbroken union with God whilst I am dependent solely on the direct help of His grace; finally, that I may not lose, through the oft-recurring infirmity of my unmortified will, the merits of that saving cross now laid upon me by God for the good of my own soul and the welfare of my flock.

“Yours most gratefully,

“L'ABBÉ PLANCHAT.”

This letter reveals the whole life and soul of its writer. Fully convinced that death is close at hand, he sets to work to collect prayers on his own behalf, as he had been accustomed to do for the souls of all in whom he took an interest. He had been in the habit of printing the letters

he sent to various communities on the approach of the First Communions or retreats, and he now does the same for himself, at the approach of what he so touchingly calls the *coup de grâce*. His last sufferings had, in reality, begun on the day of his arrest, when he was removed from the work which was so dear to him, and just at Easter too, the season when the salvation of so many souls was trembling in the balance. Thus we have seen him writing to a pious lady, in whom he had great confidence, with the intention of asking her to pray for him ; yet scarcely has he penned the first lines than he thinks only of how he can convey consolation to the afflicted ; and as his letter advances, he gradually loses sight of his primary object in writing, until he substitutes in place of himself his children and their First Communion, and concludes by offering up his own death for their sake. The priest and the apostle speak in every word of this letter, and every word of it is replete with edification for ourselves, for not only does it exhale the potent fragrance of fervent charity, but the rarer and still sweeter perfume of true humility. Expecting to be called upon at any moment to receive the baptism of blood, he is not without misgivings on account of the frailty of his nature, although he cannot but know full well, that if put to death by the haters of Christ and of the Church, it is with the victor's crown and the martyr's palm that he will ascend to the courts of heaven. Oh, marvellous blindness of the saints ! dazzled by the brightness of the Divine perfections, they forget how infinite is God's mercy, and shrink back appalled at the sight of their own imperfections. The most detailed accounts that could possibly be given could not do more to enlighten us with regard to the interior dispositions of M. Plachat, and the spiritual progress he made during the period of his imprisonment, than do the foregoing fragments written by his own hand.

M. Planchat's arrest caused no small stir amongst the inhabitants of Charonne and the adjoining suburbs. In an incredibly short space of time three hundred signatures were appended to the petition for his release which was presented to the Commune; it is needless to say that this petition was utterly fruitless. Nor were the private applications made to the President of the Government at the Hôtel-de-Ville more successful, though he received them favourably, and even protested against the violation of the rights of individuals and of liberty of conscience. Indeed the fact that urgent and numerous applications were made for the release of any particular hostage, only served to attract the attention of the cruel persecutors of priests all the more to him, and to diminish his chance of deliverance. The escape of many was merely owing to their having allowed themselves to be forgotten. Thus the steps taken in behalf of our poor Abbé, whatever their nature, did but augment the perils of his position.

Whilst public efforts were being made to effect his release, proofs of personal attachment were not wanting to cheer him in his painful captivity. Some poor women made a daily pilgrimage to the Mazas, depriving themselves of the necessaries of life in order to provide him with some alleviation of the prison regimen. These marks of gratitude required a certain amount of courage too, at a time when to make arbitrary arrests and denunciations was proclaimed to be alike the right and the duty of every citizen. However, the Abbé Planchat was not allowed to think himself forgotten. I can hardly imagine that any of his fellow-sufferers received a more delicate token of affectionate remembrance than that to which he refers in one of his letters, namely, the bouquet of wild-flowers sent by one of the boys of the *Patronage*, who strove to brighten the gloomy cell of the prisoner he so dearly loved by this grateful act of homage, *the only one in his power to give.*

We may here most fitly introduce an account given by one of the apprentices belonging to St. Anne. This boy, who during the whole of M. Planchat's captivity, evinced his gratitude to him in the most touching way, is now at the Vaugirard Orphanage, and the following details were written down from his dictation. It would only weaken the interest of his story were we to alter a single word of it; we will therefore lay it before our readers in all its native simplicity.

"I was M. Planchat's sacristan, and often went with him when he carried the Blessed Sacrament to the sick; in this way I got to be on intimate terms with him, and he used to talk quite confidentially to me. On the morning of Holy Thursday, knowing that he was to be arrested, he said to me: 'I am going to tell you a secret, you must not repeat it to any one. They want to arrest M. X—— and me, so we are going away to-day. You are to go into Paris with M. X——, he has business there, and he will not return; as for me, I cannot get away, because I expect two persons who are coming to me for confession at two o'clock.' I went with M. X—— as I was desired, and did not get back until four or five in the evening.

"As I approached the house I met several poor people looking very much dejected, who said to me: 'You have not heard it? They have arrested him! M. Planchat has been arrested!' At first I could scarcely believe them, when I got to the house I found it was but too true. Every one was in the greatest consternation. I was told that our dear Father had been treated very badly when he got near the Hôtel-de-Ville; some women had actually thrown stones into the cab which conveyed him thither.

"The next morning, Friday, the Director of the *Patronage* took me with him to the Prefecture of Police, to obtain a warrant authorizing him to visit M. Planchat in prison, and take him eatables. The number of persons waiting

like myself was very great, and we had to stand *en queue* until evening before our turn came, and the wished-for pass was handed to us.

“Meanwhile M. D—— did all he could to replace M. Planchat at the *Patronage*, and continue to prepare the boys for Easter. He made us sing Vespers in the Chapel, and gave an address instead of the instruction; we could not have Benediction, as there was not a priest to give it. On Easter Day, however, one of the Chaplains from Père-Lachaise came for the Exercises; he came regularly every Sunday afterwards. At first he used to come in a secular dress, in order to escape observation; but after a few times he wore his cassock as usual, only taking the precaution of gathering it up round him a little, and putting on a cloak over it. Then he carried a water-can or pickaxe in his hand, just like a workman, and in this manner contrived to pass without being molested by any of the people about.

“On Holy Saturday, M. D—— said to me: ‘We have not got the altar-linen wanted for to-morrow; go to Picpus and ask the ladies there for some; and if you take your pass with you, you can go and take M. Planchat something to eat afterwards.’ On arriving at Picpus, I found the house full of National Guards. I went into the parlour and began to chat with the Sisters; we said the National Guards were a set of rascals (*de la canaille*). The sisters said they could not conceive how any one could have the heart to arrest that good M. Planchat. While we were talking thus, one of the men came up and asked me what I was doing there; had I come to bring letters? I answered ‘No; I have come to fetch some altar-linen which is wanted at the *Patronage*.’ He then joined in our conversation, and said just the same as we did. When I was in the act of going away, they stopped me in the court-yard, and the Lieutenant, to whom the

National Guardsman had repeated all that I had been saying, said to me : 'So this is the way you speak of us? Did you really call us a set of rascals?' 'Yes to be sure,' I answered, 'and you cannot deny that you are, since you arrest harmless people and rob and pillage houses.' 'It is at the *Patronage* you learn all these fine things about us, is it? Why do you go there? Does your father send you?' 'No, my father does not send me; I go because I like it.' 'What is your father? Does he belong to the National Guard?' 'Yes; he is one of the *canaille*, too.' The Sisters made a sign to me from the windows not to answer in this way; but for the life of me I could not help it. 'If you don't change your tone, we shall lock you up.' 'Do as you please, you will not prevent my speaking the truth.' 'What is that you have in your hand?' 'It is a permit, allowing me to take provisions to M. Plachat, whom you put in prison.' 'You are not going to take provisions to that *calotin*.*' 'But I am though. He provided for me when he was at liberty, and you shall not hinder me from making him a return for his kindness.' 'Then you won't change your mind?' 'No, I won't.' I was then locked up. After some time had elapsed, they came back and said : 'Well now, are you still of the same mind? Do you mean to go on speaking of us in that way? Shall you go to your *Patronage* any more? Do you still want to take victuals to your *calotin*?' 'Yes, yes, yes—you won't make me change my mind.' Finding I was obstinate, they searched me, taking away my little Savings Bank book and the pass which gave me access to the prison; then they told me I might go. I replied that I should certainly not go until they restored what they had taken from me. 'You cannot have these things—they must be left here.'

* This word, a term of contempt applied to priests, is derived from *calotte*, the little cap worn over the tonsure.

‘There now, you will not give me back my property, and then you tell me you are not a set of thieves! I will not go.’

“They then inquired where I lived. I told them the street and the number. ‘Very well,’ they said, ‘we shall go and see your father, and learn whether it is he who has brought you up so well.’ I replied they might do so if they chose, for I was not in the least afraid of them; and lest they might not find the house, I gave them minute directions as to the place where we lived. At last they returned my Savings Bank book and the pass; and off I went. I ran straight home and told my mother what had happened; it made her very anxious, for she thought they would come and arrest my father. Happily, father had arranged everything beforehand, so that he was able to leave Paris the next day. In order to get past the barrier, he mixed in the crowd, and held his marriage certificate aloft as if it were a permit to leave the city (*bon de sortie*).

“With the help of my pass (which I now keep as a relic), I was able to take provisions to our dear Father every day, whilst he remained a prisoner at the Prefecture and afterwards at Mazas. Every time I went, I had to pass the National Guards at the gate, they always greeted me with savage looks, and often with abusive words. I used to go into the waiting-room, where there were a good many people who had come on the same mission as myself. I always gave the warder at the gate three *sous*, for which he undertook to see that the provisions I brought reached their destination. It would have been a great pleasure to me to see our dear Father, if only once more. In the hope of obtaining permission, I went all alone to the Prefecture, but all in vain, although I fell on my knees before the authorities and with clasped hands begged and prayed them to allow me to do so. They bade me begone with

rough words, and I really wonder now that they let me off without anything worse. People who gave them money were not generally repulsed in this way, but then I had nothing at all to offer them.

“Towards the end of the time, M. D—— gave me a note for M. Planchat, telling him that his funds were exhausted, and that he would ere long be unable to send him anything more. This note I tore up, without saying a word to M. D——, because I knew it would have vexed M. Planchat; then I used after that, to fetch some provisions from my mother’s every day, and I used besides to go without part of my own meals, in order to have enough for the dear prisoner. Thus I contrived that his daily supply should be just the same as it had been from the first.

“On one occasion he wrote word to M. D——, not to send him any more wine, as he preferred having milk. M. D—— could not understand this, as he had not been sending him milk, only wine; but I knew well enough where the milk came from, for my mother had given it me. She had great difficulty in procuring it, milk being extremely scarce at the time; but she contrived always to obtain some.

“One day, at the Prefecture, they gave me a letter from M. Planchat, at the top of which he had put the initials J. M. J. These the officials had made illegible with great blots. On giving me the letter they observed that the police never let anything pass of which they did not understand the meaning. They fancied these letters conveyed some secret intelligence.

“The three last days that M. Planchat spent at La Roquette I was unable to take him his accustomed supply of provisions, as the streets were held by the military. This was a great vexation to me, and no sooner was the

fighting over, than I lost no time in returning to the *Patronage*, thinking that our dear Father had been set at liberty, and that I should find him there; but on my way I met some poor people crying bitterly, who said to me: 'they have shot him!—the wretches have shot him!' These people seemed quite inconsolable. I was thunderstruck, and in my bewilderment hesitated whether I should go on or return home. Thinking, however, that my informants might have been mistaken, I concluded I would go on to the *Patronage* and make sure. Alas! the sad news we had heard was but too true; our good Chaplain, our dear Father, had been cruelly put to death, and we were never to see him again."

A deep impression was made on the boy, whose narrative we have given, by his intercourse with M. Planchat. He invariably speaks of him with the greatest admiration; is most eager to possess relics of him, and evidently regards him in the light of a Martyr and a Saint.

Immediately upon hearing of her son's imprisonment, Madame Planchat hastened to Paris. By dint of prayers, importunate entreaties, and courage almost akin to audacity, she succeeded in obtaining a hearing from the autocrats of the Commune, and extorting from them the permission to see her son almost daily. She made, however, but a sparing use of her privilege, for this truly Christian mother feared to weaken her son's courage by too frequent visits, and preferred to prove her maternal affection by unceasing effort on his behalf outside the prison walls. She found the Abbé Planchat broken down by the misery of a confinement, than which nothing could be more opposed to the needs of his constitution and his habits of life. Gifted with a strength of mind and an intensity of faith almost unknown in our day, this worthy mother of such a son addressed to him the following words:

“Remember how you used at college to be called the little St. Vincent of Paul. Like him you are wearing chains never intended for you;* if you have hitherto imitated his charity, now imitate him to the end, and show the same courage he showed.”

From M. de Beauvais, the doctor of the Mazas prison, Madame Plachat obtained a certificate stating the serious condition of her son's health, and the urgent necessity of his removal to a private hospital. To this certificate she subjoined a letter of entreaty, and forwarded both to a member of the Commune, Citizen Protot, a delegate presiding over the Court of Justice. However, in an interview she had subsequently with her son, she found that he opposed the idea of being removed from the Mazas, since he imagined his release to be more probable whilst he remained there, because he thought if placed in a private hospital, he might incur the risk of being forgotten. The thought of the Easter Communion which had not been made, and of the First Communion of his children which were indefinitely postponed, never left his mind. He fancied he might be set at liberty at any moment. Madame Plachat did not share these delusive hopes; her mother's heart felt instinctively how imminent was the danger threatening her son, and one day, on leaving him, she was heard to remark: “I am fully persuaded that when my son quits the prison it will be to go to heaven; but I can offer him up to God, and rejoice in being the mother of a martyr.”

In spite of this conviction, she did not relax her efforts on his behalf. No notice having been taken of her letter

* Madame Plachat was mistaken. The Abbé Plachat would have been arrested no less than all the other priests who had devoted themselves to the good works carried on at St. Anne, had they been there when the Commissioner sent by the Commune visited the house.

to Citizen Protot, she resolved to seek an interview with him. After she had waited a long time at the Court of Judicature, in the very salons where she had been a frequent guest during her husband's lifetime, under widely different circumstances, she was at last admitted into the presence of the delegate, who did not see fit to remove the cap from his head or the cigar from his lips, out of deference to a lady whose age and misfortunes constituted a double claim to his respect.

"Ah! I know what you want, you have come to claim that *calotin* your son," exclaimed Protot, with the insolence peculiar to functionaries of a democratic and social Republic.

"Yes, citizen; he is a priest, it is true, but a good republican for all that."

"How can you prove that?" asked the delegate, puffing away at his cigar.

"Have you ever chanced to meet a insignificant-looking priest in the streets of Paris, wearing a rusty hat and threadbare cassock, with his shoes full of holes and his girdle knotted up round his waist, carrying under his arm a packet of books and medals to be distributed to all comers; poor himself because all he has he gives to the poor, and only presents himself before the rich in order to beg alms of them; who trudges through remote suburbs in all weathers climbing the stairs of wretched garrets, visiting the sick, relieving the friendless and forlorn? If you have ever chanced to meet that priest, citizen, let me tell you it was my son."

"We wish the priests no harm; we only want them to go away and leave us to bring up the rising generation according to our own ideas; that is, to make men of them, instead of stultifying them with the absurd superstitions of religion."

"Allow me to ask, citizen delegate, how you intend to

form the youth of your Republic when you have got rid of the clergy?"

"We mean to open schools in which the children will be taught mathematics, algebra, chemistry, physics, astronomy, &c., &c."

"I think you are quite right, citizen, but at the same time I advise you to add to all these most desirable branches of knowledge a little book which will teach the children another thing, namely, to obey the laws of the Republic, otherwise, when they grow up they may very possibly strive to overthrow it. Now the catechism is the book most calculated to teach children obedience to the laws of their country."

"Hold your tongue, you old fool, and be off as fast as you can, or I will have you arrested."

"You must first give me an order for the Governor of the Prison, to have my son removed to a private hospital. You have in your possession the medical certificate attesting the urgency of the case."

"That is not my business; it belongs to the Committee of Public Safety."

"I beg your pardon. Were I to request the immediate release of my son, you would be justified in sending me to the *Public Safety*; but my present request only refers to a change of prison, urgently insisted on by the doctor. You cannot object to that."

"You *are* a tiresome woman; here is the order you want. Now go and fetch your son, and let me hear no more of that *calotin*."

Such was the conversation, almost word for word, which passed between the high-spirited mother and the man who was the representative, under the new government, of that great and sacred principle without which liberty exists but in name, and which we call justice.

God, Who doubtless saw this servant of His to be ripe for heaven, and had His own designs with regard to him, did not permit this order to arrive in time to save his life. When the poor mother arrived at the Mazas, and presented the paper given her by Protot, she found the hostages gone, for they had already been removed to La Roquette. The army of Versailles was making its way into Paris, and fighting was going on almost in every street. Madame Planchat attempted to pass the formidable barricades which blocked the way on all sides, but not even her unflinching courage, the courage of despair, was able to succeed. The rapid movements of the troops cut off all communication with the suburbs, where the insurrection had broken out. On the Place de la Bastille, Madame Planchat was taken by the soldiers, who, mistaken as to the cause of her extreme excitement, placed her under arrest; when she was once more at liberty, it was to find her son a martyr, and Paris free.

To those who attempted to pity and condole with her, she replied: "You call my son's death a misfortune? You ought rather to term it an honour! My proudest ambition could not have coveted a more glorious recompense, either for him or for myself."

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

WHEN the news of the entrance of the troops reached the Hôtel-de-Ville, the first thought of those in power there was, not so much how to defend the fortified positions they still held, as how to compass the death of the defenceless priests, whom they had caused to languish two weary months in prison, and that without any examination or legal forms, even the most summary. The first act of these partisans of universal brotherhood in the moment of danger was to set fire to Paris and massacre the hostages.

On Monday, May 22, an order was issued to the effect that all the hostages confined in the Mazas were to be executed without delay. The governor, either from humanity or motives of prudence, objected to the measure, alleging that capital punishment within the walls of what was merely a house of correction would be a thing altogether without precedent. He was in consequence ordered to suspend the execution, and meanwhile to transfer all the accused from Mazas to the condemned prison of La Roquette.* At about five in the afternoon, notice was given to the prisoners to prepare for departure. This was speedily effected, and they then had to appear before a delegate of the Commune.

* Vide *Acts of the Captivity and Death of the Jesuit Fathers.*

A young seminarist from St. Sulpice, the companion of the Abbé Seigneret, relates that having been separated from M. Planchat since he had met him at the Prefecture, and been taken with him to the Mazas, he now saw him again whilst waiting in the temporary place of detention, before being taken into the Recorder's Office. He was put into an intermediary cell, M. Planchat occupying the one between him and the wall. "I was beside him," he says, "and we conversed aloud. He told me we were going to La Roquette. I asked and received from him conditional absolution. A few moments later, he entered our van, occupying the last place on the right, next to M. Allard. We all made our confessions, Père Olivaint making his to M. Planchat."

The prison vans remained stationary for more than an hour after the hostages had taken their places in them. The report had got wind that the priests were about to be removed to La Roquette, and an immense crowd had collected outside, knocking loudly at the gates, and threatening to break them open if admission were any longer refused. M. l'Abbé Perny, whose narrative enables us to enter so thoroughly into the trials undergone by the hostages, tells us that in all his life it was never his lot to behold a more painful spectacle than that presented by this mob of boys, girls, low women, and savage-looking men in blouses, all wrought up to a pitch of frenzy, and uttering yells of ferocious delight. This surging mass of people, increasing in volume each moment, accompanied the van on its way, every mouth opened in hideous concert to pour out the most vulgar abuse and brutal vociferations. Nothing more frightful could possibly be imagined; it was as if hell itself had been let loose.

"Stop, stop!" cried the furious demons who followed us; "why go any further? Down with the *calotins!*"

Tear them to pieces on the spot! Take them no further! Down with them! down with them!"

"This mob," continues the Abbé, "might be compared to tigers, thirsting for our blood. The soldiers of the Commune had difficulty in keeping them within bounds. The vans advanced at a foot-pace, as if to give us time to drain our cup of bitterness to the dregs. Instead of passing down the main street through the Boulevards, we were taken through the street of the Faubourg St. Antoine, and those quarters known to be most favourable to the Commune. It was about eight in the evening when we reached La Roquette."

Here begins the long agony, which in the case of the Abbé Planchat and his companions was protracted during five days. The army, having entered Paris, speedily occupied the left bank of the Seine. The greater number of Communist chiefs prepared to make good their escape, the remainder meanwhile, forced to prolong the struggle, abandoned the Hôtel-de-Ville, and retired to the furthest positions, not forgetting to take the hostages with them. What did they intend to do with these latter? Did they mean to keep them as pledges of their own safety? or did they intend to wreak their vengeance on them later on? The few individuals among the hostages who escaped death as by a miracle have given us an account of this tragedy. Each of the five days presents one act of the terrible drama, that of Monday reminding us of the Catacombs.

We have already said that whilst at the Mazas the Jesuit Fathers were allowed to receive from outside certain alleviations of the prison dietary. In this way, with the help of a preconcerted sign, it had been possible to transmit the Blessed Sacrament to them several times. How great must have been the joy of the saintly confessors on these occasions, and how fervent the thanksgivings they offered to

our Lord, Who thus vouchsafed to come and strengthen them amid their sufferings! On Monday, May 22, although it was known that the consecrated Hosts possessed by the Fathers were not all consumed, the devoted friend whom God saw fit to make instrumental in conveying to His servants this priceless food, felt an inward inspiration, urging her to replenish the sacred store without delay. Just at noon, or a little after, a female figure might have been seen wending her way through the Boulevards de Montparnasse, de Port-royal, de l'Hôpital, and crossing the Austerlitz bridge. The streets were deserted, and the shells whizzed around her as she went, but no harm befell her. Had she been a little later, she would have found the streets barricaded in all directions. The messenger of Divine love arrived safely at the Mazas, where two books were given her, this being the signal previously agreed upon with Père Olivaint to show that he had received information of the sacred treasure which was to be conveyed to him. The precious provisions, confided to the care of a trustworthy warder, were duly transmitted to the captives for whom they were destined, and the Fathers, having opened with due precaution the receptacle containing them, found a little red silk bag for each, enclosing a box, in which were four consecrated Hosts. Later on, these formed the Viaticum of the Martyrs, as they took them with them to La Roquette. A delay of but a few hours would have deprived the saintly confessors of this last and greatest consolation, for then their courageous friend would have failed in the accomplishment of her generous design, just as the Abbé Planchat's fond mother, after having succeeded in obtaining her son's reprieve, could not succeed in bringing it to him. But charity is stronger than death, and by it that generous soul was animated, who, triumphing over every obstacle, conveyed to the prisoners the Bread of *the strong*.

In his narrative the Abbé Perny unfolds before us hour by hour, so to speak, the several acts of that terrible drama, the climax of which was now close at hand. He describes the successive phases of depression, hope, or fear passed through by the unfortunate victims, the playthings of those pitiless tyrants, whose cup of crime was so nearly full. We cannot do better than give those passages in which the writer records the experiences common to all the hostages, since they were shared by him whose holy life and last sufferings we have undertaken to narrate.

The quiet of Tuesday formed a striking contrast to the excitement of the day before. It was spent by these holy souls in mutual outpourings of charity, and in receiving rich stores of consolation from above.

“At about eight in the morning,” the Abbé Perny relates, “our cells were opened, and to our extreme surprise we were allowed to be all together in the corridor whilst the prison servants cleaned the cells. You can imagine with what warmth of feeling, with what tender charity all these condemned persons embraced each other, and how great was their joy at being thus able to pour out their hearts to one another, after their long and wearisome captivity in the Prison Mazas. A considerable number of us were strangers to one another, but the sufferings of our common captivity immediately established a close bond of intimate friendship between us all. About nine o'clock we were ordered back to our cells. In spite of the gravity of our situation, this interview had been an immense comfort to us all. In the seclusion of the prison we heard with extreme grief the noise of the battle which was raging in different parts of the city. The loud and oft-repeated report of the cannon, the shrill and incessant whizzing of the shells as they fell and exploded, the incendiary fires which broke out in various directions, all indicated that

the hour had come for the final struggle between the Commune and the regular troops. No effort of mind was required to make us feel how entirely we were in the hands of God, and enable us to recollect ourselves completely in Him. We began to reckon our existence by each minute as it passed, and the least sound in the corridor caused us to hold our breath. . . . Towards noon, we had another, and again a joyful surprise, for we were allowed to take our recreation all together in the meadow surrounding the prison buildings on three sides. Here we met the ten ecclesiastics, hostages like ourselves, belonging to the third division; his Grace the Archbishop was one of them. Everybody went up to him, and was received by him in the kindest manner, although he was at the time enduring severe physical pain. Afterwards we stood about in groups, going from one to the other to exchange salutations and mutual encouragement. This interval of recreation was no small boon to us, as affording an opportunity for receiving and administering the help and consolations of religion. I could not sufficiently admire these hostages, condemned, as I thought, to certain death, when I beheld their calm and dignified bearing, their resignation to the will of heaven, their placid and smiling countenances. Several laymen among the hostages told me of their own accord how greatly they had been struck by the conduct of the priests, who were their fellow captives, and especially by the gentleness they manifested towards our persecutors, the calmness they maintained amid the dangers which threatened us."

To these invaluable records we are able to add some details having special reference to our own beloved martyr, which were furnished to us subsequently by some of his companions, who themselves escaped death in a manner little short of miraculous.

M. D—, of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, tells us that

the cells adjoining that occupied by M. Planchat were tenanted on the one side by the Abbé Seigneret, and on the other by Father Houillon, of Picpus, both of whom were massacred with him in the Rue Haxo. M. Planchat and M. Seigneret enjoyed much spiritual intercourse. The Abbé X— tells us he heard from the lips of the latter that all their meditations, spiritual reading, and prayers were made in common, M. Planchat making his meditation aloud every morning for the benefit of his neighbour.

Some interesting particulars relating to M. Planchat and the events of this special Tuesday have been preserved to us by Father Sosthène Duval, of the community of Picpus. He recognized him in the prison yard, where the saintly victims were permitted to see and converse with one another for the first time since the commencement of their protracted incarceration. “He was pale and showed traces of having suffered greatly. I spent almost the whole of the recreation with him. Whilst we were conversing he was called away to receive some provisions which had been brought for him. He left me, therefore, for a short time, and on his return told me that the mother of one of the boys who frequented the *Patronage* was in the habit of supplying him with provisions. A few minutes before I had noticed that he was eating a slice of gingerbread.* It was then twelve o’clock, and we had had nothing that morning but our bouillon and munition bread at half-past eight. I mentioned his poor children to him, but he told me he tried to put the thought of them out of his mind, as one too acutely painful.”

“On Tuesday evening,” writes M. D—, of St. Sulpice, “at the very time the bombardment and burning of the city began, these two (the Abbé Planchat and the Abbé Seigneret) were reciting the Rosary aloud. This they con-

* Doubtless a part of the provisions distributed by Father Olivaint.

tinued to do far into the night. There was much excitement in our part of the prison on account of the fires, and, besides, they were speaking, which was against the rules. Thus the Federal soldier on duty below our windows grew perfectly furious. He flew into a passion, stormed, blasphemed, and threatened us, infuriated at his inability to stop these prayers. The two priests, in nowise disconcerted, went on with their Rosary aloud, until the other hostages entreated them to desist, so as not to irritate the wretched soldier any further, or any longer to disturb the tranquillity of night."

On this same Tuesday the consecrated Hosts, brought by the Jesuit Fathers from the Mazas prison the day before, were distributed amongst all the priests. Each received a particle, to be taken as Viaticum at the last moment. Our beloved martyr made his confession, and, like his brethren, received the sacred deposit in readiness for his last hour. A letter written on this day shows in the most unmistakable manner that he had made every preparation for death; it may, in fact, almost be termed his will.

"Grande Roquette, No. 17, 4th Division, May 23rd, 1871.

"My dear friend,—As I am one of the hostages, and placed in the condemned prison, I feel it necessary to make a few final arrangements. To begin with the most pressing: on April 6, the day of my arrest, I was commissioned to say forty-one Masses, and I am anxious that somebody should begin to discharge this obligation for me at once. If you can find any one who will say them for me as a charity, so much the better; if not, you may rely on my mother paying for them as soon as you can communicate with her on the subject. In the next place, I have several debts of long standing—some really pressing. Above all, *Spinondy's* bill. Would you ask my mother to settle it

immediately. And if she should have left Paris, beg my brother to give you an order for the amount at once. Please tell my mother that if I am put to death, I look to her to pay all the debts I have incurred for charitable purposes. I have, in fact, no others of any kind. You know the tradesmen with whom I dealt.

“May I ask you to send my letter to my brother, as when I last wrote to him it was only to acquaint him with my removal here. I am told that it is not forbidden to send provisions to the prisoners here. If you could continue to supply me as you did when I was at Mazas I should be very glad.

“It would give me great pleasure to have a word of remembrance from my old friend M. Le Prévost,* if it would not be too difficult a task for you to contrive to convey it to me. We have all been able to go to confession. Pray yourself, and get others to pray, not for me only, for us all.

“Farewell, my dear friend, continue to do all the good you can to our dear children and to all men. The reward laid up in heaven is infinite.

“Your affectionate and grateful friend,

“L'ABBÉ PLANCHAT, *Prêtre*.

“Forgive all my offences towards you and all our brethren. Kindest remembrances to all. This may be my last farewell. Remember me specially to MM. Ernest, Charles B——, &c.”

“On Wednesday, May 24,” continues the Abbé Perny, “a sharp fight went on between the Federals and the

* M. Le Prévost was a priest, and Superior General of the Community to which M. Planchat belonged. Mention is made of him in this guarded manner, for fear of betraying him to the scoundrels through whose hands the writer knew his letter must pass.

regular army. Such dense masses of smoke arose from some of the public buildings which had been set on fire, as to darken the sun's light, so that we in our cells might have imagined an eclipse to be taking place. The noise of the battle came nearer and nearer to us as the engagement between the two contending armies became more general. Our hearts throbbed with emotion; our position was most alarming. Our friends had not an idea of the tremendous danger we were in; they did not even know that we were at La Roquette. During the hour we were permitted to spend together in the morning, I fancied I could discern a glimmering of hope on the greater number of faces; a more definite expression of serenity was apparent; the mutual outpouring of hearts was tenderer than it had been the evening before. When the official in charge gave the signal that the hour of recreation was ended, the greater part of my colleagues declared how much delight and consolation this interview had afforded them. *Frater adjutus a fratre quasi turris firmissima.* Under this soothing influence each prisoner returned to his cell.

“The members of the Commune must have found themselves strangely perplexed. They imagined, inexperienced and infatuated as they were, that the regular army would waste its time in taking each barricade singly, and thus the defensive struggle would be protracted over several months. Within the space of three days all their plans were utterly defeated, and they themselves were pursued, hunted down, and dislodged from their positions with such energy and method, that they fell into hopeless disorder. The famous Assembly withdrew to the mayoralty of the eleventh Arrondissement, which was strongly fortified, and where it entrenched itself for the last time. It was from this place that the Commune issued the order for the immediate massacre of sixty-eight hostages, including all the priests,

because, as the warrant stated, some Communist officers, taken at the barricade of the Rue Caumartin, had been put to death by the *brigands of Versailles*.

“The clerk of La Roquette was filled with consternation when this mandate was placed in his hands by a citizen, much the worse for liquor. ‘It appears some Communist prisoners have been put to death. This is much to be deplored, but there must be some error on the part of the writer of the warrant. No one could order the execution of sixty-eight hostages as vengeance for the death of two or three victims. No doubt five or six was the number intended. Go back to the Commune at once, and get the mistake rectified.’

“The warrant furthermore gave orders that this fearful tragedy should be enacted at six o’clock precisely that same evening. The Communist officer, sobered by what the clerk had said to him, returned somewhat later with a revised warrant, which required the execution of six hostages this time, selected from among the priests; the name of M. Bonjean was inserted in the list.

“‘Ah!’ exclaimed the clerk, ‘here is another mistake, things must not be done in this irregular manner. You had better go back to the Commune again, for the name of this layman must be erased, and those of two or three other hostages besides.’ But the officer remained inflexible; no persuasions could induce him to take any further step. Thus the number of the victims was fixed at six, and the execution was perforce delayed two hours, instead of taking place at six p.m.

“About eight in the evening of Wednesday, May 24th, the corridor of our division (the 4th) was invaded by a detachment of Federals, the party consisting of *Vengeurs de la Commune* and soldiers from various regiments. The sabre of the officer in command clanked noisily upon the

pavement as he advanced down our corridor, talking very loudly. His arrival and that of his minions must, I am sure, have caused no small excitement in the cell of each one of the prisoners.

“‘Upon my word,’ he shouted, ‘I must put an end to all this.’ He was in the act of passing my cell as he uttered this exclamation, which might have come from the lips of a cannibal. One of the men close behind him made the following savage rejoinder: ‘They shall have us to put them to sleep to-night.’ I had stepped to my cell door; at these words I felt my blood run cold, and kneeling down on my mattress, I offered up my life to God.

“The horde of barbarians did not pause till they reached the end of the corridor; then one of them called out:

“‘Attention, citizens, answer to your names. Are you Citizen Darboy?’

“‘No,’ replied the prisoner addressed, l’Abbé Guérin, who, as he spoke, involuntarily snatched the list from the hand of the Communist; it was, however, taken from him before he had time to do more than read the names heading the list.

“‘Citizen Darboy.’

“‘Here,’ his Grace is reported to have answered in an emphatic manner. His cell door was opened, and the prelate, coming out, stood face to face with these monsters in human shape. The form of the building, and the darkness which prevailed at that late hour, prevented what went on in the corridor being seen. Five more names were called over in the same manner. I distinctly heard the reply given by M. Allard. It is well known who were the six chosen to be the first victims.

“Mgr. Darboy, Archbishop of Paris.

“M. Deguerry, P.P. of the Madeleine.

“M. Bonjean, First President of the Court of Cassation.

“Fr. Ducoudray, the Superior of the Institution known as that of St. Geneviève, in the Rue des Postes.

“Fr. Clerc, from the same house.

“The Abbé Allard, Chaplain to the Ambulances.

“The victims thus brutally carried off by night, as if their executioners required the veil of darkness for the performance of their crime, were conducted down the winding staircase leading to the meadow where we were accustomed to take our recreation. No sooner had the troop of savages left the corridor with their captives than I got up and began to pray. Ten or fifteen minutes had scarcely elapsed before the cortége passed beneath my open window, against which I was leaning. The sight made me shudder, and I quickly drew back, after I had, with uplifted hand, given absolution to the doomed men. Surrounded by the soldiers, a disorderly crew, they followed in the rear of the corporal, who, his hands thrust into his pockets, led the way. The Archbishop and M. Bonjean walked first, arm in arm, next came M. Deguerry and Fr. Ducoudray, while Fr. Clerc and M. Allard formed the last couple, M. Allard wearing his chaplain's badge and his other insignia of office. I think the chief of the party brought up the rear; I heard his sabre dragging on the ground; two or three turnkeys followed. On reaching the angle formed by the second wall enclosing the prison, the spot where they were to be executed, the victims probably knelt down for a few moments; then, placed at a distance of about six or seven feet from the wall, in a row, apparently, to judge from the marks left by those bullets which hit the wall, they soon fell under the irregular fire of the soldiers drawn up in line before them. This horrid massacre took place about half-past eight in the evening, and was distinctly heard by a considerable number of the hostages in the same corridor as myself.

“The most absolute silence prevailed in our corridor. We scarcely dared breathe, for each of my beloved brethren in Jesus Christ doubtless shared my own convictions that our last hour had arrived, and that this horde of barbarians would in a few moments re-enter the prison, and read out a fresh list. Prostrate upon the ground, I recited the penitential psalms and commendatory prayers.

“Between eleven and twelve at night sounds were again heard on the staircase, and I got up, so as to be ready to obey the first signal for departure ; but it was only some of the assassins who, doubtless accompanied by the turnkeys, had returned to the cells of those whom they had put to death, in order to carry off their belongings. They soon went away, and in about half an hour either the governor of the prison or one of the corporals came back, thus causing fresh excitement amongst the prisoners. The doors and the iron gates of the passages were closed, and I distinctly heard some one say : ‘ If they come back, I forbid you to let them in.’ I felt sure this order must proceed from the governor of La Roquette, and that at any rate no fresh execution could take place that night.

“On Thursday, May 25, about ten in the morning, I heard the steps of two or three warders coming down our corridor. They walked along in silence, and opened a door opposite my cell, but I could not catch any of the conversation which went on with the prisoner. I gazed intently through the ventilators of my door, and a few minutes after I saw the same prison officials repass, accompanied by one of the hostages. This was M. Jecker, a Mexican banker ; he had probably merely been summoned to go down to the office, without further explanation, but as he was never seen again, there is no doubt that he was put to death.

“I need not describe the feeling prevalent among the

hostages on their next meeting after the martyrdom of Mgr. Darboy and his companions. All were anxious to show respect to the Vicars-General of the late Archbishop ; as before, we formed several parties, walking up and down, sometimes with one and sometimes with another. But every countenance wore a graver expression than it had done the day before ; it was evident that the thoughts of each one were fixed on another world, and every one was doubtless saying within himself: ' Perhaps I shall not be here to-morrow.' In the course of this recreation M. l'Abbé Bécourt, the parish priest of Bonne-Nouvelle, proposed that we should all bind ourselves by vow to say a Mass on the first Saturday of every month for the next three years, if the hostages regained their liberty. We all eagerly agreed to this proposal, and the archbishop's secretary-general drew up a memorandum of this vow, in case we escaped the fury of our enemies. When our recreation was over, we took leave of one another with a secret conviction that a goodly number of us would never meet again in this world."

We learn from M. D—— of St. Sulpice, that on Thursday, at the general recreation that followed the first execution, during which every one made his peace with God, " M. Planchat confessed a private soldier in the Federal army, named Moreau, who was shot at the same time with him, in the Rue Haxo. He probably heard the confession of many others beside, but I specially noticed him walking arm in arm with this worthy soldier, who wore a blue blouse."

The Rev. Fr. Duval supplies us with another account of this recreation which took place on Thursday, the day preceding the execution. " I saw M. Planchat," he says, " walking up and down with M. Sabatier, and upon closer observation I perceived that they were confessing each other. M. Planchat had his crucifix in his sash, and I

noticed he gave it his companion to kiss. Somewhat later, he was walking alone, with his crucifix half hidden under his cassock, and he passed several of the groups of hostages, looking about him as if watching or waiting for some one. Evidently he did not wish to join any party, and it was easy for me, who knew him so well, to perceive that he was waiting for a favourable opportunity of taking aside one of the laymen amongst the hostages, in order to induce him to think about the concerns of his soul. It occasioned me no surprise, therefore, to see him later on walking alone with one of the hostages, formerly a National Guardsman, a poor man, to whom his fellow prisoners used to give alms; I felt persuaded that he was at that time engaged in one of those charitable labours which he was accustomed to accomplish in former days with so much zeal and success."

M. D—— of St. Sulpice records the following incident illustrative of his love for souls; it is, perhaps, more touching than any which it has been our lot to relate:

"M. Planchat told me he endeavoured to give absolution to the guards of the republican army who came to spend their free time, from ten to half-past, beneath our windows. Passing his hand through the bars of his cell window, this devoted priest had made the sign of the cross over them, giving them conditional absolution."

The Heart of Jesus had indeed communicated its sacred flame to the heart of His faithful follower. Nothing, not even the fear of the most imminent death, nor a suspense more cruel than death itself, had power to weaken his all-absorbing zeal. So passionate, so persistent a love of souls must touch every heart, and fill every eye with tears. The death of such a man as this is no chance result of political changes, but the final triumph and recompense of a life, every moment of which was offered as a holocaust on the altar of charity.

“Nothing occurred on Thursday,” continues l’Abbé Perny, “to disturb the tranquillity of our prison, although outside its walls the conflict between the insurgents and the regular troops raged more and more hotly. A running fire was incessantly kept up ; the report sounded almost like the explosion of a powder magazine. Incendiary fires broke out in all directions ; and when darkness fell, I noticed that Federal soldiers kept coming and going in the meadow on to which my window looked ; this boded ill, I thought, for the coming night. I fancied, too, that there were twice the usual number of sentries on guard ; however, as the most absolute silence prevailed in the house till nearly two o’clock in the morning, I concluded that no execution would take place before daybreak.

“At any rate, when Friday morning came I was astonished to find myself still alive. I felt as if living in a dream, and I am sure that the majority of my companions experienced the same strange sensation, which, indeed, is no wonder. There was a report that the member of the Commune whose business it was to convey to the governor of the prison an order for a fresh execution, had been prevented reaching La Roquette by the strategical movements of the army, which was gradually taking the last intrenchments of the Commune ; this delay gave us a ray of hope. The federals had erected batteries at Père-Lachaise, some of the bombs from which fell on the roof of our prison. This circumstance, far from frightening us, caused unfeigned joy to us all. Many of the captives at once got everything ready for departure, since they concluded that, should the shells continue to fall on the building, the authorities would be compelled to open the doors ; and it was confidently asserted that the governor of the prison had arranged everything for his own flight, as soon as the right time should come.

“On Friday, May 26, the weather was rainy, and we were not taken to walk in the meadow ; but the iron gates at each end of the corridor having been closed, we were allowed to leave our cells and walk up and down the passage. We were all very hungry. Each one of us felt that at any minute he might be led forth to execution. The bombardment which was going on from the batteries in the cemetery of Père-La-chaise caused a certain amount of confusion in the prison, and on that account we were left together in the gallery longer than usual. I regarded this circumstance as an evil augury, for I had noticed that on the previous Wednesday, after having been ordered back from the meadow to our corridor, we had been left free to return at once to our cells, or continue our recreation in the gallery.”

At length the hour of sacrifice has come, or rather of the immolation of the victims, for they had long since offered up their lives in sacrifice on the altar of their own hearts, by an act of voluntary oblation and of submission to the will of God. We are now about to witness the perpetration, under circumstances so atrocious as to be without parallel in the history of any civilized nation, of a crime more odious and more useless, more barbarous and more sacrilegious, than any which marked the whole course of the Revolution.

And by whom was this terrible deed originated and executed? By the very men who claimed to be the liberators of the human race ; who would establish liberty, fraternity, and equality amongst mankind ; who preach freedom of conscience for all, and even assert themselves to be sworn foes of capital punishment, thus putting the climax to their hypocrisy !

And whilst following to its close this wonderful narrative, which we shall give in as few words as possible, and without

further interruption, let it be borne in mind that, whilst this cruel massacre was actually the work of a rabble to which no name can be given (for it cannot be classed with what is usually understood by the populace), a rabble which, maddened with anger and brutal in its fury, was perhaps ignorant of the horrible nature of the crime it was committing, there must necessarily have been some one answerable for it ; and on whom does the guilt and responsibility rest, if we exculpate the frenzied mob of women and children who urged on the shameful butchery ?

In the account given by the radical press of the proceedings of the military tribunal which passed sentence on the principal actors in the tragedy of the Rue Haxo, it was deemed proper to substitute the word *execution* in the place of *massacre*, as if the same term could be used in reference to the hostages as was employed in the case of Tropmann ! Let us not protract our search for the real culprits, or continue our efforts to discover the persons whom the verdict of history, if not that of human justice, ought, whilst awaiting the verdict of heaven, to pronounce guilty of this terrible crime ; they are close at hand. Its true authors are those who, for the last forty years, have set themselves day by day to stir the people up to hate the clergy, to abhor religion and its institutions, perverting history, and pursuing with fanatical fury their cowardly task of insulting a class to which self-defence is interdicted, and calumniating a body of men pledged to make no other rejoinder than that of silent forgiveness. These writers no doubt justify themselves with sophisms, and deny that it is their impious doctrines and unceasing attacks which put the knife into the assassin's hand. They delude themselves into the idea that they are merely pursuing an honourable calling, and enlightening the human race by combating what they are pleased to term obscurantism.

This is what they do ; and their maxims were on the lips of the assassins whilst perpetrating their deed of blood. Francois, the former galley-slave, who at the time of which we speak was governor of La Roquette, on delivering up the hostages to their murderers, was heard to exclaim : " These priests have stood in our way for 1900 years, let us get rid of them all." And the Federals who arrested M. Seigneret and his companions from St. Sulpice, at the passport office of the Prefecture of Police, said to them : " We can never repay you for all the harm you have done to us."

And what is the language of the so-called radical and democratic press ? One and the self-same idea is developed in its every column, at the beginning and end of all its articles, down to its least important publications. The populace carries this idea to its logical conclusion, and, inflamed by passion and prompt in action, lays down the journal, and rushes off to destroy its supposed enemies. Yet, in spite of all this, these worthy journalists never cease prosecuting their task, and repeating now, as they used to do in the days of the Empire, and under the reign of the Commune : " Away with religion, away with the priests !" The blood-stained corpses of La Roquette and the Rue Haxo have failed to teach them any salutary lesson.

This is not, it is true, the first time that the Revolutionists have dyed their hands in the blood of priests ; but in '93 the authors of the massacres, previous to their enactment, at least went through some pretence of judicial proceedings, and it was only in September, 1792, that persons were butchered without sentence having been passed on them. Besides, under the old régime, ecclesiastics occupied a high social position, and held posts of great influence, whereas the Commune had absolutely no grievances to allege against the priests it arrested and put

to death, no reproaches to cast in their teeth, except those with which the revolutionary press is accustomed to taunt the Church of Christ. The priests victimized by the Commune were among the most charitable and the most popular of the Paris clergy, and it would have been too great a risk to bring them to trial, or submit them to a legal examination. They were therefore put to death, not only without defence, but without accusation; their execution was simply wilful murder, and since the only reason for it was the fact of their being Catholic priests, no one can fail to see that they were slaughtered out of pure hatred to religion. The obedience we, as Christians, owe to the Church, bids us wait until she has spoken ere we venture to pay them open homage, but no one can blame the enthusiastic admiration which leads us to salute each one of these heroes with the glorious title of martyr.

And now we enter on the closing scenes of what has been justly termed the *acts* of these martyrs; they have been carefully collected from the oral reports and written records of eye-witnesses. It will be our endeavour to narrate them with the same simplicity which constituted throughout the savour of their sacrifice, and is, so to speak, the fragrant odour exhaling from their tomb.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINAL SUMMONS.

FRIDAY was throughout a terrible day. The weather was foggy, rain fell without intermission, and the sky, besides being cloudy, was still further veiled by dense smoke arising from the incendiary fires which had been kindled all over Paris. The cannon of Père-La-chaise, in the immediate vicinity of La Roquette, thundered forth a continuous roar, the rattle of musketry was heard in the distance, and shells kept falling into the prison. The provisions had run short, and the moody gaolers were hurriedly making preparations for flight. In the midst of all this tumult and stupefaction, the hostages preserved their calmness and tranquillity, although their position was by far the most critical of all; their individual feelings, no doubt, differed widely, but one treasure they had in common, peace of mind and power of prayer. All the tortures endured in the course of this day have not yet been related, nor has the mystery enshrouding them been altogether dispelled, although the depositions of eye-witnesses, and the interrogations to which accused persons were subjected before the military tribunals, have been the means of revealing many facts hitherto unknown, besides numerous details of intense interest. We have patiently endeavoured to extract them from the mass of shorthand reports, and they will be found to throw fresh light upon our story.

All the various accounts agree in stating that the victims

were called away to be sacrificed about half-past four in the afternoon. This final summons was not the only one, for during the last hours of their protracted suspense the hostages were several times led to believe that the end had come. M. Rabut tells us that "so early as half-past one or two, a brigadier named Romain came up into the corridor with a list of names to summon certain prisoners, who were, however, doubtless confined in another part of the prison, as no one answered to the names read out. We concluded that the names were those of fresh victims about to be executed and that the brigadier had come to the wrong place."

The fact that this torture, so needlessly inflicted on the unhappy captives already hanging between life and death for the last three days, is not mentioned in any other narrative written previous to the trial, may be accounted for by the circumstance that the calling over of names took place before the recreation hour, when all the hostages met in the gallery; at a time when the greater part of them, shut each in his cell, were absorbed in meditation, and paid no heed to what passed outside.

Several of them did not even hear their own names at first. This circumstance, beautifully illustrative of the strength possessed by these generous souls has, I think, not been sufficiently dwelt upon. M. le Curé de St. Severin appears to have been quietly asleep in his cell when the final summons came, and to have only been awoken by the sound of Romain's voice, breaking the stillness of the prison. Such perfect calmness in men already under the shadow of approaching death is nothing short of sublime.

The account given by M. de Mauléon runs as follows: "Friday began much as any other day; we hoped that deliverance was at hand; firing went on in our immediate vicinity, we heard the noise of battle, and knew that the

insurgents were being worsted. Several of the turnkeys even went so far as to assure us that before sunset on the morrow we should be set free. Towards evening we were astonished to find that we were allowed to walk about as we pleased in the corridor of our section. I myself felt a little anxious as to what this might portend, and our liberty being prolonged, I grew somewhat weary; not feeling very well, I went back into my cell to say my breviary. Suddenly I became aware that a general silence prevailed throughout the section, and I heard the names that were being called out, amongst others that of my next-door neighbour. I felt horror-struck. Partly guessing the truth, and thinking that my name might be called like those of my companions, I rushed out of my cell and hastened to the spot where the names were being called. It was, I have been told, a brigadier named Romain who read out the list, and I listened until it was ended. Several persons whose names had been called asked where they were to go to, and I heard a voice—the same, I believe, which had read out the names—answer that they were to go down to the Recorder's office."

Each surviving witness of this mournful scene adds some accessory detail to fill up the outline, and depict it more forcibly to the mind of the reader. The calling over of the names was not made at once in the open space half way down the corridor, formed by the absence of two cells, and where the only window which gave light to the gloomy passage was situated, but at the entrance of the corridor, as is stated in the depositions both of M. l'Abbé Taurel and M. Chevriaux. "Tuffier was the first name Romain read out. I was standing close to one of the turnkeys, in a recess at the entrance of the corridor. Not suspecting, from Romain's manner, the fatal significance of what was going on, I repeated the name after him mechanically; he went

on reading out others, and the hostages immediately gathered round him. Then he began calling them over again, more seriously." This second reading took place in the open space mentioned above.

A detail given by M. Evrard sets before us the utter callousness of the executioners. Romain, he says, made his appearance with a cigar in his mouth, which he threw away before beginning to read from the list he held in his hand, written on a small sheet of ordinary paper. The Abbé Perny tell us that when the brigadier entered the corridor he called out, "Attention, gentlemen, attention! Answer to your names, we want fifteen of you." On hearing this, he adds, I turned to one of the hostages and said, "How terrible! Just listen! he says he wants fifteen of us!"

"We all stood around him," relates the Abbé de Marcy, "whilst he read out the appointed number of names. At one time his way of doing this was very rude and harsh. I cannot exactly say he made use of any insulting expression, but his manner was offensive, and on one of the hostages delaying for a moment to answer to his name (I think it was Father Caubert, who had gone back to his cell), Romain showed such impatience that I remarked to him, in the midst of a general silence, that nobody could wonder at some hesitation on our part in replying, considering the circumstances of the case. He retorted, 'You have only got to go down to the Recorder's office.' And I answered in my turn, 'What we have to think of is whether we shall ever get back.'

"On reading the list for the first time he could not make out Father de Bengy's name. 'Bigy! Binigy!' he shouted; whereupon the Father in question instantly stepped forward, and saying, 'You mean me,' took his place amongst the others. When all the hostages were assembled the list was

read a second time, and even at that critical moment Father de Bengy, seeing that his name still presented some difficulty, replied as he had done before."

M. l'Abbé Taurel tells us that when Romain was about to marshal the hostages and conduct them to the Recorder's office, he said, "It is nothing of consequence; you only have to go down to the Recorder's office to see the Governor." These words produced some sensation amongst the hostages, and M. de Mauléon inquired rather sharply, "Where are you taking them all? Are you going to shoot them?" Just then Father Radigue asked permission to fetch his hat, but Romain replied it was not worth while just to go downstairs; and in reply to another prisoner who made a similar request in regard to his shoes, he repeated his former remark: "It is nothing of any consequence; you have only to go down to the Recorder's office to see the Governor."

"When the condemned persons were first summoned," writes Father Stanislas Duval, "M. Planchat was standing with the other hostages near the warder who read out the names; his name was pronounced wrong, as indeed were almost all the others. Nevertheless he answered, 'Here!' and I saw him leave his place and go and stand in the vacant space made in the corridor by the absence of more than one cell on the side overlooking the central court. It was there that the warder who read out the list placed those persons who had been summoned. I fancy I still see M. Planchat standing there, his bald head uncovered, for he held his hat under his arm, so that his broad forehead could be seen; his face looked longer and thinner through the sufferings he had undergone. He stood with his back to the partition, and his face turned in the direction of the Rue de la Roquette; he seemed resting his head against the partition; I think some one said he leant against it for

support. His countenance betrayed no emotion of any kind. The hostages passed before him as they were marched away down the stairs, and when his turn came he went like the rest. All went quite simply, without showing a sign of weakness, no one indulging in heartrending farewells, in exclamations, or speeches, nor even uttering a parting word of blessing."

There was, we learn from other depositions, nothing theatrical about the scene ; not a single word was exchanged, nor blessing uttered ; the silence was most impressive, the perfect calmness of every one present giving an air of solemnity to the occasion. It was not that the hostages deluded themselves as to the fate awaiting them, but their steadfast faith gave them courage to comport themselves like men, and make the sacrifice required of them. "On finding the privilege of being numbered among the chosen band had not been granted to me, I withdrew to my cell, and there cast myself on my knees in prayer ; but I soon returned to the gallery, in order that I might once more grasp the hands of my most intimate friends. The look and smile they gave me seemed to say, 'Ours is the happy lot ; we are proud of being the victims chosen for the sacrifice.'"

It was whilst the scene we have just described was being enacted, that several of the hostages were enabled to enjoy the privilege of a last Communion, since they had reserved for this supreme moment the particles of the consecrated Hosts given them by the Jesuit Fathers. On their knees behind the half-open door of their cell they calmly awaited their summons, holding in their hands the Sacred Body of their Lord, which, as soon as their names were called, they immediately consumed, and, rising up, went forth to confront death.

We subjoin the names of the priests who were on

Ramain's list; they were united in death, and are now doubtless united in glory.

Father Olivaint, Superior of the Jesuits in the Rue de Sèvres.

Father Caubert, the Procurator of the same House.

Father de Bengy, S.J., Army Chaplain.

Father Ladislas Radigue, Prior of the Picpus House.

Father Marcelin Rouchouze, Secretary-General of Picpus.

Father Polycarpe Tuffier, Procurator-General of Picpus.

Father Frezal Tardieu, a member of the Council of Picpus.

The Abbé Sabattier, one of the clergy of Notre Dame de Lorette.

Paul Seigneret, Seminarist of St. Sulpice.

The Abbé Planchat.

While the brigadier, Ramain, was performing, as we have related, his mournful task, another prison official went by his orders into the section where the gendarmes were confined, and bade them follow him, saying, "The brigadier has just told me to come for you. I think you are to be removed to a place of safety, because of the bombardment."

A detachment of National Guards, chosen from various battalions, was waiting in the court-yard, and as soon as the hostages had come down it was drawn up in double line. When the gendarmes, thirty-seven in number, had been counted, they were made to go first; then the priests were ordered to leave the Recorder's office.

As Father Olivaint passed by the porter's lodge he handed his breviary to its occupant, saying, "Take care of that, my friend." He saw plainly that he should never use it again, and was anxious to preserve it from desecration; but one of the captains of the National Guard pulled the breviary out of the porter's hand and threw it behind the fire, saying, "It comes from a *calotin*, they are a scoundrelly

lot, only fit to be shot!" No sooner was the officer's back turned than the worthy porter snatched the half-burnt book from the fire. At a subsequent period he handed it over to the Jesuit Fathers.

As the priests were defiling into the courtyard, the commander of the federal troops, destined to form their escort, thrust his revolver into the face of the ecclesiastic who brought up the rear, at the same time exclaiming, "Go on, you wretch!" Then he ordered his band to load their muskets, and gave the signal for departure. It was now no longer possible for the patient sufferers to entertain any doubt as to the fate awaiting them.

CHAPTER X.

THE VIA CRUCIS.

THE prison gates were unclosed, and the funereal band passed through. A detachment of troops marched first, then came the gendarmes, the priests followed, and a second detachment of troops brought up the rear. The evidence for the prosecution informs us that the victims took their place of their own accord between the double line formed by the federal soldiers.

The story we have undertaken to relate becomes more intricate and obscure in proportion as the catastrophe approaches. There is a total lack of circumstantial evidence, especially of such as refers to the hostages personally, so that a momentous transaction, enacted moreover in the very centre of a teeming population, still remains somewhat vague and indefinite. The investigations of the military tribunal supplied but few fresh particulars respecting the last journey of the hostages and their

execution. The eye-witnesses, intimidated, it is said, by threats, maintained a dogged silence, even when subjected by the military authorities to the most searching cross-examination. It is however, possible, with the help of such scanty information as we have been able to collect, to describe the principal features of this horrible transaction, which extended over no less a period than two hours. We are in a position to rectify the hasty accounts given at the moment, which were for the most part either erroneous or incomplete.

The detachment, continues the evidence for the prosecution, went up the Rue de la Roquette as far as the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, where they turned off to the left, and proceeded along the Boulevard de Ménilmontant until they came to the Boulevard de Belleville. So far they had pursued their way in silence, the priests being engaged in prayer, or from time to time addressing a word or two of pious exhortation to the gendarmes, who, on their part, marched along with much self-possession. They had as yet met with little annoyance from passers-by.

The band was preceded by a man on horseback, who was apparently charged with the office of stirring up the populace and collecting a crowd; at least one is justified in this supposition by the fact that he hastened to the manufactory of Seltzer-water in the Boulevard, to apprise the workmen that some *calotins* were at last going to be shot, and were actually on the way to execution. There were a great many people about on the outer Boulevard, but not enough to satisfy those who were preparing so grand a spectacle for their entertainment. It was customary of old to lead about victims before they were slaughtered, and the victims in question must therefore be duly paraded through the most populous quarters of the city. Besides, the shells constantly falling in the streets of Belleville rendered them

dangerous ; orders were therefore given to march down the Ménilmontant road.

The barricade which closed this road where it joins the Boulevard was defended by National Guards belonging to the eleventh and twentieth Arrondissements. Their chief, who was arrayed in a Garibaldian costume, left the ranks in order to hold a parley with the Federal soldiers escorting the prisoners. The officer in charge of this squadron requested to be furnished with some additional forces ; a captain was therefore ordered to accompany him, and a lieutenant, a sergeant-major, and almost all the men present belonging to the same company, volunteered to go too. Their commander placed himself at their head and marched side by side with the leader of the escort. The party proceeded in this way along the Ménilmontant road as far as the Rue Puebla.

The crowd which was beginning to collect around the procession appeared only actuated by motives of curiosity, and a desire to see the priests and gendarmes who, it was boastfully asserted, were prisoners taken that very morning from the party which held Versailles. As yet no insults had been offered to the captives, nor a single voice raised to demand their death ; but at the top of the Rue Puebla, a change became apparent, and hostility of an aggressive nature manifested itself all at once in the demeanour of the crowd. "Down with the *calotins!* down with the *cognes!*"* they cried. The unfortunate captives had been met by some Federal chasseurs and artillerymen who had just been defeated by the regular army, and wanted to revenge themselves by shooting the hostages out of hand ; however, the march was continued along the Rue Puebla and the Rue des Rigoles, in order to reach the mayoralty of Belleville, into which the prisoners were admitted through a small door in the Rue des Rigoles.

* An epithet vulgarly applied to gendarmes.

We have never been able to ascertain what went on within. Of one thing at least we may be sure, that the unfortunate victims were given to drink deeply of the cup of bitterness, if one may judge by the shouts which resounded unceasingly in the dependencies of the mayoralty. Some pretence of a legal trial and formal condemnation was perhaps gone through, for since the morning, the last remnants of the Commune had betaken themselves to that mayoralty. The crowd not being permitted to enter, remained stationary in the Rue des Rigoles, and to the cries of "Vive la Commune! Death to the hostages!" which issued from within the house, they raised answering shouts of: "Don't let them off! don't let them off!"

Against the railing which surrounds the church, a man was leaning, bareheaded. It was Ravvier, a member of the Commune; as he watched the procession pass before him he called out: "Those men must be shot."

About half an hour after their arrival at the mayoralty, the hostages were conducted out again by the principal entrance in the Rue de Belleville. A *cantinière* on horseback went first; she wore a *képi*, her hair being drawn back and fastened in a white net; by her side rode a mounted officer. Next came the drums and fifes, playing a huntsman's march; then a detachment of National Guards, followed by the victims themselves, who walked two and two, flanked on either side by two National Guardsmen with fixed bayonets. This time the gendarmes preceded the priests, amongst whom a tall, white-haired old man was observable, who leant on his companion's shoulder, and seemed hardly able to drag himself along. This was probably Father Tuffier of Picpus. The procession was closed by more National Guards, and a vast crowd of women and children again followed, demanding with vociferous cries that the prisoners should be put to death.

The houses Nos. 169, 171, and 173 in the Rue de Belleville, had been taken forcible possession of by the Federals, because they were situated exactly opposite the street down which the Versailles troops were expected to come. The new occupants crowded to the doors, insulting the condemned and cheering on their murderers. "Vive la Commune!" they shouted, "Death to the priests! death to the spies!" Some of the more moderate demanded a court-martial. As they passed No. 229, several persons came out to ask what it all meant. "Where are you taking these soldiers and priests?" they inquired.

A Federal soldier made a gesture indicating that they were to be shot; he was answered by a cry of mingled horror and compassion.

"Where are they going to?" was asked a second time. One of the National Guards stopped, so as to allow the crowd to pass on, and then replied: "They are going to heaven!"

This man then hurried into the house, and begged that some one would kindly provide him with a suit of clothes, in order that he might disguise himself and thus effect his escape. Two of his comrades also turned back and made a similar request.

As the procession was passing the Cité Lemière, a young man placed himself at its head, and executed, with the help of his gun, a series of pantomimic performances, pausing ever and anon to demand, with word and gesture, the death of the gendarmes and the priests. Those who saw him involuntarily recalled to mind the dances which savages perform around the prisoners they are about to devour.

Amid the general frenzy some of those who followed in the rear remained calm, wishing to appear superior to the rest, and orders to close the windows were invariably heard.

above the bloodthirsty clamour of the mob. On some one having, in spite of this injunction, opened a window in the house no. 259, a National Guardsman fired his revolver at the offender; he was, however, roughly handled by his comrades in consequence.

At last the Rue Haxo was reached. Several men on horseback came up and took their places beside the Garibaldian commander, who was riding first. The 172nd, 173rd, and 174th battalions occupied the approaches to the street; from their ranks two shots were fired at the captives, but no one was wounded, as aim had been taken too high. For this imprudent act, the would-be assassins were placed under arrest.

At this point the crowd was very dense. Those among the spectators who had come from a distance to witness the execution—and they formed a decided majority—never ceased to vociferate, calling for the death of the hostages. Their cries were echoed by some of the inhabitants of that quarter, but opinions seemed divided, and the people were heard to say: “It will bring no good luck to Belleville. It will be a bad thing for the National Guards who belong here!”

Nevertheless the Federals freely insulted the unfortunate captives, and, in order to stir up the people, gave out that they were being brought direct from Prince Eugène, having been taken in the act of heaping up corpses to form barricades. Madame Laurent states in her evidence that one of the escort, a Garibaldian, stepped up to her and said: “Do not grieve over those fellows, they murder women and children.” Others were heard to add: “Let us make an end of them, now we have got them.” They even held out hopes of more victims, of which these were only the fore-runners.

From the time of leaving the mayoralty, the mob in

attendance was really like nothing else than a pack of hell-hounds ; it was something frightful to witness the ferocity exhibited by the roughs of both sexes, who had streamed thither from every corner of Paris. Revolvers were thrust into the faces of the hostages, and they were threatened with drawn swords ; some persons, having singled out an individual as the special object of their fury, would elbow their way through the ranks of the escort, and pressing up to their intended victim, hold some weapon to his throat, and shriek out : "Look at this ! I am going to lay you low in the dust with it before long !"

Others again, the habitual orators of the clubs, no less infuriated, and recognizing in this mob their accustomed audience—an audience, moreover, which it had been their delight to make what it was—took occasion to deliver brief harangues on popular justice, and to promise that the avengers of the Commune should receive honourable mention in the newspapers of the morrow. The entire extent of the long Rue de Belleville and the Rue Haxo was traversed amid these hateful scenes, until the hostages were completely worn out.

The martyrs, M. l'Abbé Raymond relates, remained unmoved by these threats and bloodthirsty yells. As far as we have been able to gather, the only complaint which was uttered, escaped the lips of a gendarme, who when he caught sight of the Romainville gate, exclaimed : "Oh ! my poor wife and my three children !" All marched along courageously to meet death ; the dignified bearing of the aged priest especially, who was doubtless animated by the near prospect of a martyr's palm, excited universal surprise. The general verdict was that they looked like men who had made up their minds.

Amid these tortures, the Abbé Planchat moved on with down-cast eyes, profoundly recollected, intent only on offer-

ing to God the sacrifice of his life; so intense was his pre-occupation, that he had not even a word to say to a little child belonging to the *Patronage*, who happening to be on the spot, courageously made his way up to him in order to bid him good-bye. Perfect indeed must have been the detachment of the holy martyr from everything pertaining to earth, since he could even allow such an expression of faithful affection to pass unheeded, when offered by one of the children he loved so well. This is the only incident personal to M. Planchat during the whole of this lengthened period of suffering which has been preserved to us.

The hostages had hitherto been marched along very rapidly, but after the two shots fired at the escort, they had received orders to quicken their pace yet more; they were then just turning the corner of the Rue Haxo. Here they found themselves completely surrounded; the battalions shouted: "Vive la France! Vive la République!" and the hostages raised their hats.

The decisive moment had come; now or never the crime must be perpetrated. There was a moment's hesitation: was the Commune going to draw back at last?

We learn from the evidence given by Madame Barre, that just at that time, or perhaps somewhat sooner, one of the leaders, mounted on horseback, and wearing a red and black cap, was seen conferring with some one who was urging him to bring matters to a conclusion, and not let his courage fail him. On the name of M. Vermorel being heard, the National Guards exclaimed: "Now, Citizen Vermorel, no weakness, let us finish our job!"

It was Vermorel, one of the Commune, who, at the head of the melancholy procession, made a last and futile attempt to save the victims from the hands of their executioners. When the warrants for the arrest of the hostages were issued, this man, supported by a few of his colleagues, had at

the Hôtel de Ville opposed the measure ; but all in vain, and the unhappy man who, although led astray by political excitement, and become the slave of revolutionary despotism, had never entirely lost the faith implanted in him by the training of his youth, which was passed in the Jesuit College at Mongré, thus found himself compelled to conduct to the scaffold the friends and brethren of his former preceptors, men whom he still held in affectionate remembrance. A few days later he was himself taken prisoner at Versailles, mortally wounded ; and it happened to be a Jesuit, Father de Regnon, who heard the dying man's confession.

For some time, writes Father de Regnon, I found him obdurate, but all at once he drew me to his side, and without the slightest agitation, pulling my head close to his, he said : " Very well, Father, I will intrust the salvation of my soul entirely to you ; deal with it as you would wish your own dealt with."

" Our beloved martyrs of the Society," answered the Father, " will rejoice that it is one of their brethren in religion who is called to minister to you at this moment." These words brought the tears to his eyes. " Ah, yes !" he replied, " I wish I could have saved them ; but they were cruelly murdered all the same !"

In fact, on the way to the Rue Haxo, his pallor, his emotion, and evident remorse, had been remarked by the men under his command, so that they had called out to him : " Now, Citizen Vermorel ! we will have no weakness ; let us finish our job !"

The unhappy man had been forced to yield ; the mental agony he endured must have been something terrible.

If the Jesuit Fathers thus reckoned one of their old pupils among their murderers, what must be said of the Abbé Planchat ? In that dense mass of human beings gathered together in the very quarter of Paris, nay, the very

streets which he had so often traversed on his errands of beneficent charity, how many miserable creatures were there whom he had sought out and aided in bygone days, but who stood and watched him pass in the midst of outrages and bloodthirsty yells, without daring to utter a syllable in his defence, much less to raise a hand for his deliverance ! How many like Vermorel, wretched victims of revolutionary tyranny, equally its slaves whether they called themselves officers or private soldiers, even went so far as to shout : "Death to the priest !" and then like the rest, to fire blindly at their benefactor, in the fearful massacre which ensued ! The thing is horrible, but not the less true for that, and is doubtless the cause of much secret remorse of which the world as yet knows nothing, but which time will infallibly bring to light. It is not, however, to be supposed that the martyr recognized these basest of his persecutors.

At last the procession reached the gate of the *Secteur*.* The following is taken from the evidence of a man named Lequesne, who lived on the spot :

"I saw the whole party arrive in the Rue Haxo ; they stopped before my house, no. 92 : the foremost were exactly under my windows. The priests and gendarmes were accompanied by about five hundred or six hundred armed men, and a rabble of women and children, shouting and screaming ; they surrounded the hostages. Two or three leaders on horseback were present ; as they stood before my door some scheme was concocted, and I saw them send out two messengers, to whom they gave instructions. These emis-

* That is, the buildings where the Government of the section was carried on. During the siege of Paris, the word *Secteur* was applied to the divisions into which the city was marked out ; each of these sections comprised within its limits a portion of the fortifications, for the defence of which a military force was appointed. A civil administration was also attached to the military commandship. This method of division was kept up by the Commune.

saries went to the *Secteur*, whence they speedily returned, bringing some answer for their leaders; who then, rising in their stirrups, turned to the crowd, apparently consulting them about something. When they ceased speaking, a shout of: 'Put them to death!' arose from the assembled multitude; not a single dissentient voice was raised. 'Citizens,' shouted one of the leaders, 'we have sent to see if there was a court-martial at the *Secteur*; there is not one. What is to be done with the hostages?' All here call for their death."

At this juncture, the passions of the people, lulled for a moment, were again excited by the appearance of a young man, wearing a white cravat, his fair hair in great disorder, who rushed forward and gave the order to advance. The crowd applauded; cries of death were heard from the windows of no. 88. Once more the command to shut all windows was reiterated, and a cart, to which the horses were still harnessed, being drawn into the centre of the street, a man mounted on it, holding a red flag in his hand, and began to harangue the people. "Citizens," he cried, "the devotion of the populace must not go unrewarded; we bring you these hostages as a compensation for your sacrifices: put them to death!" These concluding words were drowned in a tumult of applause; nothing was heard but shouts of "Vive la Commune! à mort, à mort!"

The prisoners were immediately taken into the *Secteur*. A colonel led the way, an officer brought up the rear, who, as he went, pricked the unfortunate prisoners in the back with the point of his sword; it was only too obvious that they were being led to the slaughter. An artilleryman of exceptional size and strength stood at the door, and as the condemned crossed the threshold, he dealt to each a blow with his formidable fist. The old priest failed to notice a little step at the entrance, he struck his foot against it and

stumbled in consequence; the blow from the soldier laid him prostrate upon the ground, whereupon one of the Federals hit him with the butt-end of his musket to force him to rise. The crowd poured after them into the narrow passage, but the limited space being incapable of containing more than six or seven hundred persons, the two thousand men, women, or children composing the escort surged back into the adjacent streets. The hostages were no longer surrounded by guards, they were encompassed by executioners; pushed along, carried off their feet, buffeted on all sides, they were finally drawn into the centre of the seething crowd, where every arm was raised against them, every bloodshot eye glared with fury, every mouth foamed with rage. This terrible progress, in the midst of bloodhounds panting for their prey, had already lasted two hours, the crowd ever assuming growing proportions and perpetually increasing in its hideous ferocity.

And then a tremendous clamour arose from the dense mass of human beings which filled every house and garden and street; a clamour which increased in volume and was continued during the whole time of the massacre, covering as with the roar of thunder both the dull muttering of the cannon and the sharp rattle of the murderous musketry: "A mort! à mort! à mort!"

Meanwhile the unresisting victims walked on swiftly and resolutely, silently invoking blessings on their executioners, who were about to open for them the gates of Paradise!

CHAPTER XI.

THE MASSACRE.

ALTHOUGH Vincennes has been very frequently described, we must nevertheless recall some of its topographical features in order to render more intelligible to the reader the last scene which yet remains for us to depict.

Before the war, Vincennes was a sort of rural suburb of Paris, consisting of villas, forming the summer residences of some of the townspeople, to each of which a garden was attached. During the siege these villas were occupied first by the staff-officers of the *Secteur*, and later on by Federal officers ; they were consequently reduced to a most deplorable condition. Finally, when the Commune was at its last gasp, they afforded a refuge to the remnant of its adherents, those who still called themselves its delegates in the War Department, the Finance, &c. It will be seen what was the attitude assumed by these men in presence of a crime of which they were at least the passive spectators, if not the active abettors.

The passage, of considerable length, mentioned above, leads into a courtyard, the farther side of which is shut in by a building occupying its entire length. On the left is another enclosed piece of ground, separated from the first by a wall, in which is a gateway. In this second enclosure, on a line with the afore-mentioned building, a ball-room for open-air entertainments was, previous to the war, in the course of erection ; later on the horses of the officers had

been stabled there. At the time of which we are speaking all that marked its site was a low wall, probably intended to be surmounted by trellis-work, at a distance of eighteen to twenty feet from the wall which shut in the enclosure on that side, and was perhaps thirty feet in height. The space between the two walls formed a sort of trench ; it was there that the massacre took place.

From two hundred to two hundred and fifty ruffians had volunteered to do the dreadful deed. They entered the second enclosure by the gateway to which we have already alluded, while the rest of the crowd, the hostages, and the Federal soldiers who had escorted them thither, remained in the outer one. The gate was guarded by a sergeant of the 74th, who prevented any one from penetrating into the space reserved for the murderers, and which one of the guilty persons fitly denominated the *arena!*

The hostages were not thrust into the trench all at once. They were put to death, not in tens, as some people have averred, but three or four together at first, and then singly, one after another, to the very last man. The proofs of this fact are irrefragable, it has been affirmed by eyewitnesses, and acknowledged by the assassins themselves.

As for the executioners, some climbed on to the low wall, others fired as best they could, crowding together, and discharging their weapons at their victims as they successively came through the gateway. The balls frequently rebounded on the murderers, sometimes wounding them severely ; but neither this nor the blood which gushed out upon them availed to extinguish their fury. We learn from the evidence for the prosecution that the martyrs had the additional torture of witnessing the last struggles of those who passed before them into the valley of death. Some were even covered with the blood of their companions before they themselves entered the fatal enclosure.

Such, then, was the mode in which the forty-seven hostages were executed. They were not put to death in a wholesale manner, nor even ten at a time; no, they were cut down one by one, and their slaughter extended over a period not of ten, or even fifteen, but of no less than twenty-five minutes; and that is not long for such detailed butchery.

The first account of the transaction, though it filled every one with just horror, fell far short of the reality; and it is impossible to deny that the statement made at the trial by the venerable Abbé Perny, for many years a missionary in China, was correct, when he said that the cruellest tortures practised by heathens and savages were far less barbarous than those which were invented by revolutionists and atheists in the nineteenth century.

The following account is taken from the depositions of M. l'Abbé Carré :

“On arriving at the offices of the *Secteur*, the crowd accompanying the hostages streamed in a tumultuous rabble into the passage leading to the garden. The porter distinctly saw one of the frantic wretches deal the Abbé Seigneret a heavy blow on the head with the end of a pistol, in consequence of which he reeled, and would have fallen against the lodge door, had he not been borne up by the crowd between him and the wall, who thrust him over to the other side, into the arms of a set of ruffians similar to themselves. These latter knocked him about most unmercifully, and at length literally dragged him through the mud to the bottom of the garden, where he was left for dead.”

Dalivous, when under examination, gave the following account :

“When the procession had entered, the crowd immediately followed, and the men under my command drew up in double file, but they were almost directly ordered back

into the house to put down their knapsacks; then out of it again that they might draw up as they had done before. While the officers were in the *Secteur* the crowd was very noisy. Parent came out with his immediate followers, and the Garibaldian officer took a folded paper out of his breast-pocket and gave it him. This paper Parent proceeded to read to the people; then he asked them whether the lives of the prisoners should be spared, or whether they should be put to death. Thereupon arose shouts of 'Put them to death!' and about a hundred and fifty men rushed upon the detachment with whom I was standing alongside the wall, and dragged the hostages out of my keeping, taking ten the first time, then slaughtering them singly."

Did the massacre begin at once, without even an effort being made to rescue the victims? One of the members of the Commune asserts the contrary, but we cannot gather from his narrative any definite information as to the conduct of those insurrectionary chiefs who were present, viz., Parent, Varlin, and Piat. We will, however, let the latter speak for himself.

"At about five in the afternoon I heard a tremendous noise, and angry shouts. The crowd was so dense, numbering about two thousand persons, that I was unable to cross the courtyard, and had to go round close to the wall. When I got as far as the office I met Colonel Parent, he was talking to Varlin, a Communist, who had just come up. Parent said to us: 'Perhaps you may be more successful than I have been in trying to prevent this terrible butchery.' Then he explained to us that about fifty gendarmes and priests had been brought there, and were at the mercy of an infuriated mob, who were about to shoot them. Varlin and I immediately repaired to the place of execution; on reaching the low wall behind which, in a sort of trench, the hostages had been placed, we mounted on it, and did our

very utmost to obtain a postponement of the execution, so as to gain time to assemble a court-martial or military tribunal, or at any rate to get the prisoners out of the power of this drunken rabble. None of the regular soldiers belonging to the National Guard were present, only a motley multitude armed with weapons of every description, horse-pistols, fowling-pieces, chassépots, &c. ; they were all loudly wrangling as to who should actually perform the deed of blood. The rest of the hostages were still in the outer court ; only two brigadiers and two private soldiers had gone into the inner one, and they behaved admirably in presence of the crowd which went on insulting them. Notwithstanding all our arguments we could not obtain even a few minutes' respite. I do not know whether what we said was heard at all, for besides the two hundred and fifty individuals who were shrieking out 'Shoot them ! they have murdered our brothers !' and other things which I could not catch ; the mob outside was shouting too, and those who composed it were by no means superior to the rabble who had forced their way in for the purpose of despatching the prisoners. I could not contrive to address them, for although we waved our scarves and sashes in the hope of obtaining silence, all was in vain. Not half a minute after I got down from the parapet the first shot was fired, and before I had gone ten paces a man came up to me, complaining that he had been wounded by a ball which, rebounding from the wall, had struck him in the hand. I bade him be off, and even added : 'You beast, you have only got what you deserve.'

In the course of another examination which Piat underwent at a subsequent period, he acknowledged that when Parent requested him, as a member of the Commune and of the Central Committee, to endeavour to allay the fury of the crowd, this request was not meant in earnest. In fact,

the majority of the depositions allege that the sole part played by Piat consisted in taking from the Garibaldian chief the sentence of death written by Ranvier, and reading it to the executioners. But supposing Piat really made the attempt, and made it in good faith, does this suffice to absolve the Commune from all responsibility in the matter? The despotic nature of the powers with which its representatives were invested made it their duty to pursue a widely different line of conduct, and the cowardice of these Pilates, who washed their hands of the innocent blood they allowed to flow, cannot obtain acquittal for them at the bar of history, or justify their infamous complicity in a crime which it was their duty to prevent at the risk of their own life.

“It seems,” says another account, “that the gentle and dignified bearing of the hostages, and the calm expression of their countenances, alike devoid of resentment and fear, produced a momentary impression even on their murderers, causing them to hesitate, for they paused awhile, as if afraid to lay hands on them, in spite of the inflammatory cries and shouts of ‘Death to the prisoners!’ which re-echoed from the farthest ranks of the assembled multitude. Just then the *cantinière* who had accompanied the party came forward, shouting: ‘No mercy to the Versaillais! They are assassins! Away with the *calotins!* Away with the gendarmes!’ Thereupon she fired her pistol. This was the signal for a general massacre. Shots followed upon one another in rapid succession, till they grew into a sort of irregular running fire. Crowds of women, tearing down the brickwork, scrambled on to the top of the outer wall, whence they cheered on the murderers, and heaped invectives on their unhappy victims. Ten of the hostages were at once thrust into a small enclosure, partitioned off from the court where we were by a low wall and a wooden barrier, then into a sort of trench between two

walls. Before any word of command could be given, shots were fired from all sides from guns and revolvers, and in this fashion all the other victims were put to death."

We here subjoin the account given by a boy of fourteen years old, a turner's apprentice, named Augustin Fleury, who was at play in the Rue Haxo when the priests and gendarmes were brought there, and who saw all that went on from behind the lattice-work of a gateway overlooking the place of execution. "First of all three gendarmes were pushed into the enclosure, being driven in by blows from the butt-end of a musket; they were stationed with their faces to the wall, and then all the National Guards fired on them, quite at random and of their own accord. Then the other hostages were thrust in one by one, and shot down as they entered; I saw fifty or sixty butchered in that way. The command to fire came from a *cantinière* belonging, as the number on her *képi* showed, to the 74th or 174th battalion. The priests were shot last."

When questioned by the officer appointed to give a report of the whole, the same boy added some further details:

"First of all the gendarmes were struck down by shots fired at them, then the other hostages were made to follow, one close upon another, and as fast as each man came up he instantly fell, for the Federals were only five or six paces off, and as soon as they had discharged their guns and pistols they immediately reloaded them. At the end of about twenty or twenty-five minutes, when they had all fallen, and their corpses lay heaped one upon another, a fresh volley was fired on them. But this was not the end, for two or three officers, and as many Federal soldiers trod them under foot. I noticed one gendarme still writhing convulsively in a pool of blood until some one put a pistol to his ear, and blew out his brains."

This frightful butchery lasted more than a quarter of an hour. Only in one instance do we hear of active resistance being offered, and that resistance was of a nature that may truly be termed heroic. Several eye-witnesses have stated that at the moment when a young man in the prime of life, named Ganty, and belonging to the Parisian Guard, bared his chest to receive the bullet of a Federal Marine who was taking aim at him, an aged priest, unable to control his indignation, pushed aside the murderer, and stepped between him and his intended victim. The good old man was shot down at once, and the sole result of this generous action was to redouble the number and atrocity of the mutilations practised upon his corpse.

The Abbé Raymond informs us that M. Tuffier was singled out as the object of special violence and insult. "The women shrieked, 'Three shots for him ;' and reproached him with having spent his long life in teaching error. His only answer was to extend his hand and bless them ; this made them say that 'the old fellow' was asking for quarter. He fell at the third shot, apparently dead ; but when the firing ceased he rose up mechanically, and ran towards the wall as if seeking to escape. The executioners rushed upon him ; one of them blew out his brains. When all was over, a young man was heard to say : 'Did you see how that old priest's brains came out on me?' The last shot prostrated him, face downwards ; one of the murderous wretches kicked him over on to his back, and seeing that he still breathed, hastened to give him the *coup de grace*."

One of the boys from St. Anne was present at the execution, but hitherto no one has succeeded in inducing him to tell anything relating either to the massacre in general, or the death of M. Planchat in particular. Whenever the subject is mentioned to him he bursts into tears, and only answers with sobs.

We have thus been enabled, by means of information collected on all sides, to follow one by one each step in the last probation of the saintly martyrs. The physical tortures they underwent were fearful, but the mental agony inflicted on them by their persecutors was even worse. Nothing but a miracle could have rendered it possible for these men, worn out alike in body and mind by protracted sufferings, following on a long period of enervating confinement, to bear up against them all without betraying even momentary weakness. In fact, the sight of their fortitude so deeply impressed one of the men subsequently brought to trial, himself perhaps one of their murderers, that, when the deed of blood was accomplished, he could not refrain from exclaiming, surrounded as he still was by a frantic multitude who might turn on him at any moment: "These men did indeed die most bravely, most nobly, most gloriously! They must be something more than human to meet death in such a manner!"

How much these words imply, and how valuable is their testimony, coming from such lips! One might imagine oneself reading the Acts of the Martyrs, who in the midst of tortures appeared to the eyes of their bewildered executioners already transfigured with brightness and radiant with glory.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INTERMENT.

WHEN the massacre was over, the escort returned through the gate, and a fair young man, supposed to be Dacosta, shouted to the crowd : " Bravo, my friends ! you have done a good day's work ! " The people kept pouring out. In their midst was the *cantinière*, vociferating threats and blasphemy. As she passed no. 210, Rue de Paris, she was heard to say : " An old rogue of a priest seemed as if he would not die, so I broke his jaw with my pistol, and then crushed his face in with the heel of my boot. " At the same time she derisively twirled a calotte on the end of her revolver.

This *cantinière*, going down the same street, saw a guardsman, and went up to him to talk over what had just happened. " Well, Marie, what do you say to it all ? " he inquired. She replied : " I thrust my hand down a wretched priest's throat to tear out his tongue, but I could not get it out ! "

A Federal soldier appeared, bearing a calotte aloft on the end of his bayonet, and shouting : " See here all that is left of the priests ! " By the time the soldiers had got as far as the Rue de Belleville, a second trophy had been added to the first, for one of them had hooked a cassock on to the point of his bayonet. They were singing in chorus, " Here's the cap and the gown of the shaven crown ! "

But before dispersing some refreshment was indispensable. The wine-merchants' shops were invaded, and one could hear the savage jests of the barbarians, fresh from their bloody orgies. A boy of fourteen or fifteen years of age boasted of having killed the first man. It was probably the same lad who before the execution had expressed the wish to "pay out that old fellow" (M. Tuffier). A woman, twenty-seven years of age, said: "One devil of a priest thought he was going to get up again! Would I let him? I jumped over the wall and finished him." And another remarked: "If I had the whole lot of priests, they should all go the same way, from first to last!" "Ah," chimed in an old hag, "if they were not done for I would put the finishing stroke to a good many of them." And her daughter, twenty-one years of age, shrieked out to a pious lady who lived close by: "Well, are you not coming down to look after your dear friends the priests?"

It was about seven in the evening when all was over. An eye-witness heard a man say, as he stood looking at the corpses of the slaughtered victims: "What are those few! Now to-morrow we shall count them by thousands, it will be something worth speaking of; but this handful is a mere nothing!"

The bodies were left lying unburied until the following day, Saturday, when a pit was dug on the spot, and they were all thrown in pell-mell. M. Léon, who witnessed this revolting spectacle, describes it as follows:

"Four men had undertaken the job of collecting the bodies of the murdered hostages, and they brought them to a fifth man, who wore red trousers, and had a knife in his hand. He searched and stripped the dead. I myself saw him look in their pockets, and ascertain by personal investigation whether they wore anything next their skin. He put whatever he found on the corpses into a little box

of white wood. Seven still remained to be interred, when I saw a man bring one of them to the edge of the pit, and push it in with a kick. At this stage of the proceedings I deemed it best to withdraw." Doubtless the next thing the wild beasts did was to divide their spoil.

On the following Monday, May 29, the relatives and friends of the murdered victims assembled towards evening round the horrible grave in the Rue Haxo. M. l'Abbé Raymond, one of the Belleville priests, presided over the disinterment of the bodies with a courage which did him honour. A good many persons were standing about in groups, some Fathers of the Society of Jesus, a few women, the wives and mothers of the Republican guards who had been slaughtered, besides several boys from the *Patronage*, who, together with some poor women from Charonne and some Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, had come to search for M. Planchat's corpse. As soon as it was dragged out of its unhallowed tomb, before his brethren in religion could identify the body, the poor women and children recognized it at once, and burst into tears, exclaiming: "There is M. Planchat!"

They were beforehand with us, for whilst we still doubted, their sobs broke out on all sides. One of the gravediggers then remarked to a young man, whose grief appeared quite inconsolable: "Do not grieve so for your master; look, he died with his eyes raised to heaven!"

We were much struck by this fact, the truth of which was undeniable. It told what had been his last thought, his last aspiration—what had, in fact, been the aim and object of his whole life!

EPILOGUE.

THE Institution of St. Anne, hitherto obscure and unknown, will from henceforth see its name shine out brightly in the annals of the Church in Paris. The hand of revolution has destroyed shrines venerated in days of yore, but in our midst a new sanctuary has arisen. Many will flock to this humble chapel to implore blessings and favours from heaven.

We bid you come, Brothers and members of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, who have devoted yourselves to the service of the poor ; and you, clergy of Paris, whatever your age and position, we bid you come and learn a lesson from the example of this Apostle of the poor and little ones !

And you, his poorer friends, working men, and little children, who knew the Abbé Planchat, who witnessed his devoted labours, and understood his loving heart, come and pay your tribute of respect in the favoured house, within whose walls the lowly priest did so much good, but where you will no longer find him ready to welcome and console you.

Enter this temple, and kneel at the foot of the altar whose steps you will indeed never again see him ascend, in order to offer the Adorable Sacrifice on behalf of your sins and sorrows, but where he is yet present in spirit in your midst.

He prays for you in heaven ; and surely not for you alone : his ardent soul and generous heart cannot fail to intercede likewise for the conversion of those misguided men who hate the priest they do not know.

Above all, he prays for his murderers, whom he blessed and pardoned with his latest breath.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT from the official report of the discovery and burial of the body of M. Henri Planchat, who was shot by the insurgents out of hatred to the faith, on May 26, 1871, and interred in the chapel of Notre Dame de la Salette, at the mother-house of the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, Vaugirard :

“ On Whit Monday, May 29, 1871, we, M. Lantiez and M. Maurice Maignen, of the Society of Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, having been informed on the preceding night that our beloved Brother Henri Planchat had been shot by the insurgents, set about taking the necessary steps for the recovery of his venerated remains, in order to pay him those last honours to which he was so justly entitled. After we had obtained from the officers of Marshal Mac-Mahon's staff, then quartered at the Foreign Office, the passes requisite to enable us to traverse Paris, where the insurrection had only just been quelled by the regular troops, we repaired to the Convent of Picpus, then the headquarters of General Vinoy, to obtain the information and authorization necessary for the prosecution of our researches. At the prison of La Roquette we were unable to procure any definite information ; one corpse, said to be that of a priest, was shown us, but we saw at once that it was not M. Planchat. We next went to the *Patronage of*

St. Anne, at Charonne, in order to get the director of the house to assist us in our undertaking. Accompanied by him, we sought to gain some intelligence from persons living in the neighbourhood of La Roquette, who asserted that they had seen the Abbé Planchat shot there. All our efforts proved fruitless, so we returned to the prison and made fresh attempts, which had, however, no better result than the first. At last we were directed to go to the mayoralty at Belleville, where, it was said, we could learn full particulars respecting a number of victims who had been shot in that quarter. We got there about four or five in the afternoon, and one of the *employés* told us that there had really been an execution at no. 85, Rue Haxo, and that we must make haste if we wanted to be present at the disinterment then going on there. We re-entered our carriage, and about half-past five we reached the spot which had been pointed out to us. Several bodies had already been disinterred under the superintendence of M. l'Abbé Raymond, parish priest of Belleville. Fathers Bazin and Escaille, S.J., were there looking for the bodies of Fathers Olivaint, Caubert, and de Bengy; from what they told us, it seemed probable that M. Planchat had been put to death in this place, and that his body was in the pit where the corpses of all the victims had been flung. We at once ascertained that he was not amongst those already disinterred, and then we remained patient spectators of the course of this tedious and painful proceeding, which occupied several undertakers' men, assisted by some of the Volunteers of the department of the Seine, for nearly four hours. We particularly noticed the courageous conduct of M. Valin, an officer belonging to this corps; he went down himself into the pit of corruption every time that a body had to be drawn up, and fastened the ropes round it for this purpose, pursuing his revolting task with a persever-

ance which was truly admirable. He is said to display similar firmness under fire. We inspected each body as it was exhumed, in case it might be the object of our search; whilst doing so we recognized Father Olivaint and Father de Bengy; Father Caubert had already been identified previous to our arrival. At last, just before seven o'clock, when about fifty bodies had been disinterred, one, still dressed in a cassock, was drawn out, and this proved to be M. Planchat. He was terribly disfigured, so that it was only by his general appearance that we knew him; on closer inspection the marking of his linen and some peculiarities about his dress left no doubt as to the correctness of our surmise. His head had been crushed in behind, his eyes were still open. Every one who saw him as he lay stretched out upon the ground said he had died looking up to heaven. One of the many young men to whom he had been so true a friend, was present on the spot, together with his mother; they had come of their own accord to assist in the search, and both recognized him instantly. The tears and lamentations of the young man were heart-rending; in fact so incontrollable was his grief, that at one time we feared he would faint away over the body of his benefactor. But presently he grew calmer, and was greatly consoled on being allowed to take away with him the sash worn by M. Planchat and stained by the martyr's blood. The precious remains were laid in a coffin, which the Jesuit Fathers kindly permitted us to place in the hearse that they had brought to remove the bodies of the Fathers of the Society and of the Abbé Seigneret. Just as we were leaving, a commissary of police came up, and demanded the names of those whose bodies were being conveyed away, and of the persons who had been present at their disinterment and who had aided in their identification. As soon as these formalities had been gone through, we

got into a carriage and followed the hearse containing the bodies of the five martyrs. It went at a foot-pace, and in this manner we went down Belleville and all across Paris. Many persons recognized the melancholy procession as we went along, and respectfully raised their hats. About nine at night, we reached the Rue de Sèvres, where the Jesuit Fathers took charge of the bodies of their brethren in religion, and we then proceeded to St. Sulpice, in order to deposit there the corpse of the Abbé Seigneret. It was a quarter to ten when we at last arrived at Vaugirard with the precious relic which was peculiarly our own. The following days were employed in making arrangements for the obsequies, which took place on Wednesday, May 31, at the parish church of Vaugirard, all the clergy of which showed us the greatest kindness, and rendered us every assistance within their power. The Requiem Mass was sung at noon, all the officiating clergy being taken from the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul. The body was met by the rector of the parish, and the absolution was pronounced by M. l'Abbé Petit, the Archbishop's Secretary-General. The church was quite full, for the evening before, at the devotions for the Month of Mary, the rector had invited his parishioners to be present at the ceremony, pronouncing at the same time a panegyric in honour of M. Plachat, and dwelling upon the apostolic life he led whilst residing at Vaugirard and Grenelle. The number of ecclesiastics present was large, considering at what short notice the invitations had been issued. When gathered in the sacristy, awaiting the departure for the cemetery, they were all unanimous in requesting that the remains of the Abbé Plachat should not be interred there, but buried separately in our house at Vaugirard. M. l'Abbé Le Rebours, who had already written a letter to us on this subject, insisted specially upon this arrangement, which, however, it was

impossible for us to carry out at once, because we had no authorization to do so; and besides, everything was in readiness at the cemetery and nothing at the orphanage. We therefore set out for the cemetery. All the parochial clergy, the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, the boys from the orphanage, and great numbers of the laity followed the body, for which a temporary grave had been prepared. Nothing but the piety of those who were present marked these modest obsequies. On the conclusion of the ceremony, M. Hello, one of the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, immediately repaired to the head-quarters of General de Cissey, who was in command of the left bank of the Seine, and procured the necessary authorization for the disinterment of the body and its final interment in our chapel at Vaugirard. The corpse was therefore once more exhumed, and we availed ourselves of the opportunity thus afforded to cut off some portions of the clothes. At length the coffin was placed in the hearse and conveyed to the chapel of Notre Dame de la Salette, in the vestibule of which it was deposited until the time when, order having been once more restored, it might be laid in the last resting-place prepared for it in the chapel itself. On Friday, June 16, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to which M. Planchat had a special devotion, the coffin was lowered into the vault, in the presence of all the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul who were at that time in Paris. Thus the congregation now possesses in its midst, in the mother-house, a precious pledge of the blessing of God upon its apostolic labours."

The following epitaph was at a subsequent period engraved upon this martyr's tomb, to which frequent pilgrimages are made, and which is constantly adorned with wreaths and other votive offerings :

HIC JACET
 HENRICUS MARIA MATHÆUS PLANCHAT,
 PRESBYTER CONGREGATIONIS FRATRUM S. VINCENTII A PAULO.
 VIR EXIMIA IN PAUPERES CHARITATE;
 PERFECTÆ HUMILITATIS EXEMPLAR;
 QUI CUM PER ANNOS PLUS QUAM VIGINTI
 SE TOTUM EGENORUM SERVITIO MANCIPASSET,
 INNUMEROSQUE E VITIORUM TRAMITE
 AD MELIOREM FRUGEM* ADDUXISSET,
 AD IMPIIS VIRIS COMPREHENSUS,
 ET IN CARCEREM CONJECTUS,
 PAULO POST TRUCIDATUS,
 QUADRAGESIMUM OCTAVUM ÆTATIS ANNUM,
 PROFESSIONIS VERO DECIMUM SEPTIMUM AGENS,
 PARIISIIS IN CÆDE VIA HAXO PERPETRATA OCCUBUIT
 7^o KAL. JUNII, ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXXI.

*"Popule meus quid feci tibi? . . .
 "Ego te pavi manna per desertum,
 "Et tu me cecidisti alapis . . . et
 "Flagellatum tradidisti."*

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
 HENRI MARIE MATHIEU PLANCHAT,
 PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF BROTHERS OF ST. VINCENT
 OF PAUL;
 A MAN REMARKABLE FOR GREAT CHARITY TO THE POOR;
 A MODEL OF PERFECT HUMILITY;
 WHO FOR UPWARDS OF 20 YEARS DEVOTED HIMSELF UNRESERVEDLY
 TO THE SERVICE OF THE NEEDY,
 AND AFTER HAVING RECALLED GREAT NUMBERS
 FROM THE PATHS OF VICE TO THOSE OF VIRTUE,
 WAS SEIZED, CAST INTO PRISON,
 AND SHORTLY AFTERWARDS PUT TO DEATH BY WICKED MEN,
 IN THE 48TH YEAR OF HIS AGE,
 AND THE 17TH OF HIS RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.
 HE FELL AT PARIS IN THE MASSACRE OF THE RUE HAXO
 ON THE 27TH DAY OF MAY, ANNO DOMINI 1871.

*"O my people, what have I done to thee? . . .
 "I fed thee with manna in the desert,
 "And thou didst strike me, thou didst scourge me,
 "And deliver me up."*



